Literature and Society in the Fourth Century AD

PERFORMING *PAIDEIA*, CONSTRUCTING THE PRESENT, PRESENTING THE SELF

Edited by
LIEVE VAN HOOF
PETER VAN NUFFELEN

MNEMOSYNE SUPPLEMENTS MONOGRAPHS ON GREEK AND LATIN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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Performing Paideia, Constructing the Present, Presenting the Self

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Lieve Van Hoof and Peter Van Nuffelen

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Abbreviations

CIC	P. Krueger and T. Mommsen, eds., *Corpus iuris civilis* (Berlin, 1904). 3 Vols.
CIL	T. Mommsen e.a., eds., *Corpus inscriptionum latinarum* (Berlin, 1893–)
CJ	*Codex Iustinianus*, cf. CIC
CSEL	*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*
CTh	T. Mommsen, ed., *Theodosiani libri* XVI *cum constitutionibus Sirmondianis et Leges novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes* (Berlin, 1905)
HLL	P.L. Schmidt and R. Herzog, *Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike*, 3 Vols. (München, 1989–)
ILCV	E. Diehl e.a., eds., *Inscriptiones latinae veteres christianae* (Berlin, 1925–)
LSJ	H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, H.R. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1996)
LTR	M. Buchberger, W. Kasper, K. Baumgartner, eds., *Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche*, 11 Vols. (Freiburg, 1993–2006)
PG	J.P. Migne, eds., *Patrologia cursus completus. Series graeca* (Paris, 1857–1866)
PL	J.P. Migne, eds., *Patrologia cursus completus. Series latina* (Paris, 1844–1855)
PLRE	J.R. Martindale, J. Morris, A.H.M. Jones, eds., *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, 3 Vols. (Cambridge, 1971–1992)
RE	G. Wissowa e.a., eds., *Realencyclopädie der classischen altertumswissenschaft* (München and Stuttgart, 1894–1980)

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CHAPTER 1

The Social Role and Place of Literature in the Fourth Century AD

Lieve Van Hoof and Peter Van Nuffelen

Interest in the literature of Late Antiquity has lagged somewhat behind in comparison with the boom in late antique history. More work has appeared recently, but, understandably in a field where some basic work still needs to be done, most of this has been in the field of editions, translation, and stylistic analysis. Much of current scholarship on late antique literature therefore remains focused on exploring strictly literary issues, i.e. what a text means and what tropes it uses, at best in relationship with earlier, classical literature. The difference between the Second and the so-called 'Third Sophistic' is often assumed to be that in Late Antiquity, literature lost its social prominence and retreated into the school and the private reading room: the third century marks the break between the vibrant Second Sophistic and its arid successor.[1] This volume starts out from the hypothesis that these perceived differences should be attributed less to a fundamental and sudden change in the role of literature than to different scholarly methodologies with which texts from the second and the fourth century are being studied.[2]

1 Late Antique Literature: Continuity and Discontinuity

As a booming field, the study of Late Antiquity still defines itself in opposition to older visions of a general, political and cultural, decline of the ancient

1 For recent restatements of this view, see M. Hose, "Die Krise der Rhetoren: Über den Bedeutungsverlust der institutionellen Rhetorik im 4. Jahrhundert und die Reaktion ihrer Vertreter," in C. Neumeister and W. Raeck, eds., *Rede und Redner: Bewertung und Darstellung in den antiken Kulturen. Kolloquium Frankfurt a.M., 14.–16. Oktober 1998* (Frankfurt, 2000), pp. 289–299; P.-L. Malosse and B. Schouler, "Qu'est-ce que la troisième sophistique?," *Lalies* 29 (2009), 161–224. It underpins many papers in E. Amato, A. Roduit and M. Steinrück, eds., *Approches à la Troisième Sophistique: Hommages à Jacques Schamp* (Bruxelles, 2006).

2 Cf. L. Van Hoof, "Greek Rhetoric and the Later Roman Empire: The 'Bubble' of the 'Third Sophistic'," *Antiquité Tardive* 18 (2010), 211–224.

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world after 250 AD. Such views were generated by the idealization of the classical, especially in the nineteenth century, and were transmitted through an education that tended to focus on a strict canon of authors: Plato not Plotinus, Demosthenes not Libanius, Tacitus not Ammianus. Whereas the label of decline was also applied to other post-classical periods, such as the Hellenistic Period, it has stuck the longest to Late Antiquity. The profound political and religious changes after 300 AD undoubtedly contributed to a persistent emphasis on what separates the later ancient world from the preceding centuries, rather than on what unites both periods. Late antique rhetorical culture is, for example, still routinely characterized as one dominated by the school, in the sense that rhetoric was primarily performed there and hence lost its prominent role in wider society.[3] This impression is sustained by the accidents of manuscript transmission, which makes that we possess an important number of rhetorical treatises and exercises from Late Antiquity, in contrast with the less abundant harvest for earlier periods. As a static and increasingly socially meaningless practice, late antique sophists are seen as giving way to the new artisans of the word, the bishops.[4] Negative judgements abound on some of the typically late antique literary productions, such as historical *epitomai*, which have been derided as nothing but summaries for emperors whose grasp of classical history and culture was shaky at best.[5]

It is interesting to note that similar negative judgments were, until a few decades ago, also commonly made about the Second Sophistic, a period now synonymous with the dynamic interaction of literature and society. Without

3 P. Wolf, *Libanios: Autobiografische Schriften* (Zürich, 1967), p. 12; E.J. Watts, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria* (Berkeley, 2006), p. 14 who speaks of a 'self-sustaining culture' through education. This impression is perpetuated by the numerous excellent studies of late antique schools and rhetoric: e.g. R. Cribiore, *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch* (Princeton, 2007); R. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1988); R.J. Penella, *Greek Philosophers and Sophists in the Fourth Century AD: Studies in Eunapius of Sardis* (Leeds, 1990); idem, *The Private Orations of Themistius* (Berkeley, 2000); idem, *Man and the Word: The Orations of Himerius* (Berkeley, 2007); idem, ed., *Rhetorical Exercises from Late Antiquity: A Translation of Choricius of Gaza's Preliminary Talks and Declamations* (Cambridge, 2009).

4 H.-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris, 1938); A. Quiroga Puertas, "From Sophistopolis to Episcopolis: The Case for a Third Sophistic," *Journal for Late Antique Religion and Culture* 1 (2007), 31–42; Malosse and Schouler, "*La troisième sophistique*".

5 See A. Momigliano, "Pagan and Christian Historiography in the Fourth Century," in A. Momigliano, ed., *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 79–99, at pp. 85–86; H.W. Bird, *Sextus Aurelius Victor: A Historiographical Study* (Liverpool, 1984).

wishing to deny the profound political and cultural changes that affected the later Roman Empire, it should be emphasized that it is not because the world changes, that rhetoric and literature cannot continue to be a way of negotiating the new social conditions of the new empire. On the contrary: the literature of the Second Sophistic has been shown to explore issues that were of fundamental importance in contemporary society, such as the idea of hellenism, masculinity, and relations with Rome.[6] Why, then, could literature not be used to explore the new issues raised by the new circumstances in later Antiquity? In fact, this is almost stating the obvious for Christian literature, as sermons were occasions when social roles, local identities and religious boundaries could be defined (not to mention the nature of Christ, the most important Christian issue of the day).[7] But the question needs to be asked concerning classicizing literature as well: the traditional view that sees this strand of literature as isolating itself from the changes of society may simply not do justice to it.

If this volume shifts attention to elements of continuity, it is not out of a desire to ignore change. But since recent suggestions that the fourth century sees the birth of a 'Third Sophistic'[8] which is fundamentally different from the Second explicitly or implicitly re-emphasize change, it may be a salutary correction to draw attention to elements of continuity. Moreover, by proposing to apply methodologies to the fourth century that are usually applied to the Second Sophistic, this volume also makes a more correct comparison of the two periods possible.

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6 Classic works include M. Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton, 1995); S. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, AD 50–250* (Oxford, 1996); S. Goldhill, *Being Greek under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic, and the Development of Empire* (Cambridge, 2001); T. Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (Oxford, 2001); and idem, *The Second Sophistic* (Oxford, 2005).

7 P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity. Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, 1992); idem, *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* (Hanover, 2002); I. Sandwell, *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity. Greeks, Jews, and Christians in Antioch* (Cambridge, 2007).

8 For the problematic nature of the term 'Third Sophistic', see D. Westberg, *Celebrating with Words: Studies in the Rhetorical Works of the Gaza School* (Diss. Uppsala, 2010), pp. 19–20; Van Hoof, "Greek Rhetoric"; R.J. Penella, "Prologue," in A. Quiroga Puertas, ed., *The Purpose of Rhetoric in Late Antiquity* (Tübingen, 2013), pp. 2–5. More positive assessments of the term: Amato, Roduit and Steinrück, eds., *Approches*; Quiroga Puertas, "Sophistopolis"; Malosse and Schouler, "*La troisième sophistique*".

A single volume cannot pretend to allocate late antique literature its definitive place within the history of European literature.[9] We rather wish to focus on one specific issue, namely the social role of literature: the present collection explores how literature functioned within fourth-century society. Shifting attention away from the literary question of how texts position themselves in a literary tradition as well as from the historical question of how they reflect past realities, the emphasis of this volume is on how literature impacts on society and how that impact is exploited by its practitioners.[10] There are two reasons for the choice of this focus.

2 Histories of Late Antique Literature

First, the question of the social function of literature cuts across some of the traditional oppositions with which scholarship has tended to approach late antique literature. Without wishing to claim that it does justice to every piece of scholarship, we would like to suggest that three main narratives influence studies of literature in Late Antiquity.

The first is the narrative of Christianization and resistance to it. This narrative comes, arguably, in two forms: one that emphasizes the fact that non-Christians posit and exploit what they see as an inherent link between the classical literary tradition and pagan religion (despite the works of Alan

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9 R. Herzog, ed., *Restauration und Erneuerung: Die lateinische Literatur von 284 bis 374 n. Chr.* (München, 1989) [= Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike, eds. Reinhart Herzog and Peter Lebrecht Schmidt, Vol. 5]; M. Vessey, "From Cursus to Ductus: Figures of Writing in Western Late Antiquity (Augustine, Jerome, Cassiodorus, Bede)," in P. Cheney and F.A. de Armas, eds., *European Literary Careers: The Author from Antiquity to Renaissance* (Toronto, 2002), pp. 47–103; idem, "Reinventing History: Jerome's Chronicle and the Writing of the Post-Roman West," in S. McGill, C. Sogno and E.J. Watts, eds., *From the Tetrarchs to the Theodosians* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 265–289; S. Mratschek, "Epochen und ihre Grenzen. Spätantike Literatur zwischen Tradition und Innovation," in A. Jordens, H.A. Gärtner, H. Görgemanns and A.M. Ritter, eds., *Quaerite faciem eius semper: Studien zur den geistesgeschichtlichen Beziehungen zwischen Antike und Christentum. Dankesgabe für Albrecht Dihle zum 85. Geburtstag aus dem Heidelberger "Kirchenväter Kolloquium"* (Hamburg, 2008), pp. 241–254.

10 Discussing the impact of Peter Brown's work on recent scholarship, M. Vessey, "The Demise of the Christian Writer and the Remaking of 'Late Antiquity': From H.-I. Marrou's Saint Augustine (1938) to Peter Brown's Holy Man (1983)," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6 (1989), 377–411, notes (on p. 411), in that type of historiography, the "tacit and tactical effacement, in the interests of a certain kind of vividness or (in Momigliano's phrase) social-historical 'full-bloodedness', of the products and procedures of ancient literacy".

Cameron[11] this is still a popular interpretation of late fourth century senatorial interest in classical literature);[12] and another one that focuses on the difficult relation of Christian authors with the classical tradition.[13] In both cases, the rise of Christianity is seen as the crucial social change. Obviously, one cannot deny the importance of Christianity as a historical phenomenon nor its impact on literature.[14] Yet as an interpretative mould this narrative may distort our perspective: if we believe in a strong opposition between pagan and Christian literature, we are buying into late antique rhetoric, both pagan and Christian. Under often thick layers of Christian polemic against classical literature, for example, there usually is a profound acceptance of classical culture and education—one obvious reason being that most Christian authors had received a traditional education and rhetorical training.[15] Equally, as this volume seeks to show, behind the rejection by Christian authors of the pride of their pagan colleagues in seeking fame through literature lurks the acceptance of the power that literature had, and not just for spiritual instruction. And again, several authors or works of literature simply cannot be classified as either pagan or Christian.

11 See now Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford, 2011).

12 See, e.g. P. Courcelle, *Lecteurs païens et lecteurs chrétiens de l'Enéide, vol. 1: Les témoignages littéraires* (Paris, 1984); S. Goldhill, "Religion, Wissenschaftlichkeit und griechische Identität im römischen Kaisserreich," in D. Elm von der Osten, J. Rüpke and K. Waldner, eds., *Texte als Medium und Reflexion von Religion im römischen Reich* (Stuttgart, 2006), pp. 125–140; J. Stenger, *Hellenische Identität in der Spätantike: Griechische Autoren und ihr Unbehagen an der eigenen Zeit* (Berlin, 2009); S. Ratti, *Polémiques entre païens et chrétiens* (Paris, 2012).

13 C. Gnilka, *Der Begriff des rechten Gebrauchs* (Schwabe, 1984) and the later works on *chresis* by this scholar; P. Gemeinhardt, *Das lateinische Christentum und die antike pagane Bildung* (Tübingen, 2007); T. Krämer, *Augustinus zwischen Wahrheit und Lüge: Literarische Tätigkeit als Selbstfindung* (Göttingen, 2007). See T. Gärtner, "Die Musen im Dienste Christi: Strategien der Rechtfertigung christlicher Bildung in der lateinischen Spätantike," *Vigiliae Christianae* 58 (2004), 424–446 on form and content. Much of the work on hellenism in historiography belongs in this category: see especially Averil Cameron and Alan Cameron, "Christianity and Tradition in the Historiography of the Later Roman Empire," *The Classical Quarterly* 14 (1964), 316–328; Averil Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (London, 1985). A. Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea: Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity* (Philadelphia, 2004) argues for the political meaning of literary classicism.

14 On the latter, see, e.g., Vessey, "From Cursus to Ductus".

15 R. Shorrock, *The Myth of Paganism: Nonnus, Dionysos and the World of Late Antiquity* (London, 2011), pp. 7, 15–20 offers a clear assessment for Greek literature; see Gemeinhardt, *Das lateinische Christentum* for Latin culture.

The second narrative focuses on the continuity and transformation of classical literary traditions. Some of the finest work on late antique literature has tried to define the changes in style and genre that characterize the period.[16] This narrative usually disregards the pagan-Christian divide and studies general changes that cut across that opposition, and often points to the literarization of the classical heritage, especially the pagan gods.[17] In this context, *paideia* and hellenism are seen as a shared background that generates similarity in form across religious boundaries, even if they could serve particular causes.[18] This is important work, but some of it tends to disregard the social context. It is interesting to note that Claudian, the most explicitly political poet of the fourth and early fifth century, has recently been studied mainly from a purely intratextual perspective.[19] A recent volume claims the existence of literary manifests in late Latin Christian literature, but fails to discuss the obvious question to whom they were addressed and what the aims envisaged were.[20] In this context one must also situate attempts to define the specifically late antique 'poetics' or ways of practising literature.[21] Such work methodologi-

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16 J. Fontaine, "Unité et diversité: Du mélange des genres et des tons chez quelques écrivains latins de la fin du IVe siècle: Ausone, Ambroise, Ammien," in Alan Cameron et al., eds., *Christianisme et formes littéraires de l'antiquité tardive en Occident* (Vandoeuvres, 1976), pp. 425–472; idem, "Comment doit-on appliquer la notion de genre littéraire à la littérature latine chrétienne du IVe siécle?," *Philologus* 132 (1988), 153–173; idem, "Sulpice Sévère et l'esthétique de la prose théodosienne," *Revue des études latines* 83 (2005), 179–193; M. Roberts, *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (New York, 1989); S.F. Johnson, *Greek Literature in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot, 2006); A.M. Wasyl, *Genres Rediscovered: Studies in Latin Miniature Epic, Love Elegy, and Epigram of the Romano-Barbaric Age* (Cracow, 2011).

17 C. Schindler, "Claudians 'pagane' Götter: Tradition und Innovation in der spätantiken Panegyrik," *Gymnasium* 115 (2008), 331–345.

18 G. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor, 1990); Stenger, *Hellenische Identität*; Johnson, *Greek Literature*.

19 E.g. F. Felgentreu, *Claudians praefationes: Bedingungen, Beschreibungne und Wirkungen einer poetischen Kleinform* (Stuttgart, 1999); C. Schindler, *Per carmina laudes: Untersuchungen zur spätantiken Verspanegyrik von Claudian bis Coripp* (Berlin, 2009); C. Ware, *Claudian and the Roman Epic Tradition* (Cambridge, 2012). But see also W.-W. Ehlers, F. Felgentreu and S.M. Wheeler, eds., '*Aetas Claudianea*': *Eine Tagung an der Freien Universität Berlin vom 28. bis 30. Juni 2002* (München, 2004); M.-F. Guipponi-Gineste, *Claudien: Poète du monde à la cour d'Occident* (Paris, 2010).

20 P. Galland-Hallyn and V. Zarini, eds., *Manifestes littéraires dans la latinité tardive: Poétique et rhétorique* (Paris, 2009).

21 S. Döpp, "Die Blütezeit lateinischer Literatur in der Spätantike 350–430 n. Chr.: Charakteristika einer Epoche," *Philologus* 132 (1988), 19–52; Roberts, *The Jeweled Style*; Fontaine,

cally brackets the question of what the classical still could mean in society and focuses on its forms and transformations in particular texts.

Thirdly, scholarship on late antique literature has a marked preference for what are, in modern eyes, the most obvious literary texts, namely poetry.[22] The major poets, such as Claudian, Prudentius, Ausonius, and Rutilius Namatianus have received detailed literary studies, whereas texts in prose are often left to historians. The first attempts to read late antique historiographical texts as literature met with opprobrium,[23] but have recently been vindicated.[24] Panegyrics, the *panegyrici latini* as much as the speeches of Libanius, were mainly quarried as a source for history and imperial ideology, much less as literary works in their own right performing a wide range of social functions.[25] As recently noted by Averil Cameron, late antique dialogues have hardly been studied at all.[26] Obviously, it would be unfair to suggest that historians are unaware of the literary nature of their sources; but as we have shown for the crisis in Antioch of 362/3, a full understanding of the literary nature of Libanius'orations is needed before one can attempt to reconstruct events.[27] Equally, Libanius' collection

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"Sulpice Sévère"; M. Formisano, "Towards an Aesthetic Paradigm of Late Antiquity," *Antiquité Tardive* 15 (2007), 277–284.

22 See, e.g., A.-M. Palmer, *Prudentius on the Martyrs* (Oxford, 1989); M. Malamud, *Poetics of Transformation: Prudentius and Classical Mythology* (Ithaca, 1989); J. den Boeft and A. Hilhorst, eds., *Early Christian Poetry: A Collection of Essays* (Leiden, 1993); L. Gosserez, *Poésie de lumière: Une lecture de Prudence* (Louvain, 2001); M. Lühken, *Christianorum Maro et Flaccus: Zur Vergil- und Horzarezeption des Prudentius* (Göttingen, 2002); H. Harich-Schwarzbauer and P. Schierl, eds., *Lateinische Poesie der Spätantike: Internationale Tagung in Castelen bei Augst, 11.–13. Oktober 2007* (Basel, 2009).

23 K. Rosen, *Studien zur Darstellungskunst und Glaubwürdigkeit des Ammianus Marcellinus* (Bonn, 1970); idem, *Ammianus Marcellinus* (Darmstadt, 1982).

24 F. Paschoud, "Se non è vero, è ben trovato: Tradition littéraire et vérité chez Ammien Marcellin," *Chiron* 19 (1989), 37–54; idem, "Valentinien travesti, ou: De la malignité d'Ammien," in J. Den Boeft, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler, eds., *Cognitio gestorum: The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Amsterdam, 1992), pp. 67–84; idem, "Mendacii splendor: Formes d'entrée en matière et protestations de véridicité dans la littérature de fiction," *Latomus* 54 (1995), 262–278; idem, "L' 'inventio' dans l' 'Histoire Auguste'," *Cassiodorus* 3 (1997), 117–130; G. Kelly, *Ammianus Marcellinus: The Allusive Historian* (Cambridge, 2008).

25 P. Petit, *Libanius et la vie municipale à Antioche au IV siècle après J.C.* (Paris, 1955); C.E.V. Nixon and B.S. Rogers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyrici Latini* (Berkeley, 1994).

26 A. Cameron, *Dialoguing in Late Antiquity* (Washington, DC, 2014).

27 L. Van Hoof and P. Van Nuffelen, "Monarchy and Mass Communication: Antioch 362/3 Revisited," *Journal of Roman Studies* 101 (2011), 166–184.

of letters has been studied only as a historical source—well illustrated by the fact that most translations have a clear preference for 'historically interesting' letters or letters discussing a specific topic under scrutiny.[28] It is hard not to see the relative lack of interest in prose and the focus on poetry as a result of the view that late antique literature retreated from society and became 'purely literary'.

These three ways of approaching late ancient literature all have their value and have produced excellent scholarship. Yet they do not exhaust the possible perspectives on late antique literature. The focus on the social role of literature proposed in this volume cuts across all three.

3 Literature and Society

The second reason for chosing a socio-literary approach is that it offers a clear point of comparison with earlier periods of classical literature. In particular, for the Second Sophistic much work has been done on the nexus of literary performance, social status, and Greek culture.[29] The succesful performance and display of Hellenism and *paideia* was expected of upper class Greeks and Romans and could also provide a way to acquire or enhance an enviable social position. As was noted above, it is still commonly assumed that this nexus broke down in the fourth century, that literature withdrew from public life into the classroom and reading room, and that the future was now to the practitioners of Latin, law, and useful arts such as shorthand, whereas orators steeped in the Greek classics were figures of the past. Recent work has done much to undermine this stereotypical assessment. For example, in *Power and Persuasion* Peter Brown has stressed the importance of *paideia* as a common culture, shared across religious boundaries in Late Antiquity. For him, rhetoric throve in the 'many interstices' of 'the autocratic structure of late Roman government':[30] it created ideal images of just rulers to fend off the dangers of autocracy. Whilst importantly underlining the role rhetoric could still have, Brown's Curti Lectures also seem to accept the perspective of an orator like

28 E.g. A.F. Norman, *Libanius: Autobiography and Selected Letters*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1992); S. Bradbury, *Selected Letters of Libanius from the Age of Constantius and Julian* (Liverpool, 2004); Cribiore, *The School of Libanius*.

29 Most important of these is T. Schmitz, *Bildung und Macht: Zur sozialen und politischen Funktion der zweiten Sophistik in der griechischen Welt der Kaiserzeit* (München, 1997). See also the works cited above in note 6.

30 Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, p. 30.

Libanius, for whom the demise of *paideia* under the weight of autocracy was only a matter of time. Malcolm Heath's argument that a strong grassroot rhetorical culture existed into later antiquity is an important corrective to the view that rhetoric progressively declined.[31] In fact, it provides a *raison d'être* and a social context for the proliferation of handbooks and schools of rhetoric. Roger Rees, in turn, has shown that Latin panegyric must be read in its local context: orators negotiated complex relationships between local and imperial powers and success in such acts of balance could open up possibilities for social promotion.[32] Recently, Gianfranco Agosti has suggested a performative context for late ancient stone epigrams seeing them as testimonies to the existence of learned audiences that could appreciate their intricacies.[33] Most work on the social impact of literature has focused on letters, as the social context is here most obvious: letters establish networks, maintain friendships, and negotiate favours.[34] Such approaches bear further exploration.[35]

Indeed, given that fourth century literati and aristocrats were fully aware of the continuing social status of literature,[36] it is appropriate to ask how the interaction between literature and society was conceptualized and how it

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31 M. Heath, *Menander: A Rhetor in Context* (Oxford, 2004); C. Humfress, "Law in Practice," in P. Rousseau, ed., *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Malden, 2009), pp. 377–391.

32 R. Rees, *Layers of Loyalty in Latin Panegyric, AD 289–307* (Oxford, 2002).

33 G. Agosti, "*Paideia* classica e fede religiosa: Annotazioni sul linguaggio dei carmi epigrafici tardoantichi," *Cahiers Glotz* 21 (2010), 329–353 and G. Agosti, "Saxa Loquuntur? Epigrammi epigrafici e diffusione della *paideia* nell'oriente tardoantico," *Antiquité Tardive* 18 (2010), 149–166.

34 S. Rebenich, *Hieronymus und sein Kreis: Prosopographische und sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Stuttgart, 1990); P. Bruggisser, *Symmaque ou le rituel épistolaire de l'amitié littéraire: Recherches sur le premier livre de la correspondence* (Fribourg, 1993); D. Trout, *Paulinus of Nola: Life, Letters, and Poems* (Berkeley, 1999); idem, "Amicitia, Auctoritas, and Self-Fashioning Texts: Paulinus of Nola and Sulpicius Severus," *Studia Patristica* 28 (1993), 123–129; S. Mratschek, *Der Briefwechsel des Paulinus von Nola: Kommunikation und soziale Kontakte zwischen christlichen Intellektuellen* (Göttingen, 2002); A. Cain, *The Letters of Jerome: Asceticism, Biblical Exegesis, and the Construction of Christian Authority in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2009); A. Schor, *Theodoret's People: Social Networks and Religious Conflict in Late Roman Syria* (Berkeley, 2010).

35 See also N. McLynn, "Among the Hellenists: Gregory and the Sophists," in J. Bortnes and T. Hägg, eds., *Gregory of Nazianzus: Images and Reflections* (Copenhagen, 2006), pp. 213–238 [repr. in N. McLynn, *Christian Politics and Religious Culture in Late Antiquity* (Farnham, 2009)]; J.H.D. Scourfield, ed., *Texts and Culture in Late Antiquity: Inheritance, Authority, and Change* (Swansea, 2007).

36 E.g. Symmachus, *Epist.* 1.20.1: *iter ad capessendos magistratus saepe litteris promovetur*, ed. and trans. J.-P. Callu (Paris, 1972). For further evidence, see the chapter by B. Lançon.

impacted on readers and writers, performers and audiences. This volume thus wishes to ask to what extent literature was still the locus of important social debates, and to what extent it could still be the instrument and expression of social promotion it had been in previous centuries. In particular, it tests the hypothesis that there is more continuity than traditional views about a retreat of rhetoric into the school and a slow fossilization of literature and traditional culture from the fourth century onwards suggest. At the same time, it wishes to ask what changes the position of literature underwent. Focusing on the long fourth century, running from the age of Diocletian to the Theodosian period, this general topic is approached through three interlocking themes.

(1) *Performance*. Studies on the Second Sophistic have underlined the importance of actually performing a speech. The full implications of this still need to be explored for late antique rhetoric from all levels of society, from a humble petition to court panegyric. The notion of 'performance' draws attention to the fact that works of literature are conceived in view of the effect they generate in the audience and that that effect is achieved in the act. As a consequence, it draws attention to the 'interactive' nature of literature: being 'cultured' did not only mean being capable of listening to a speech and understanding its allusions, but also responding creatively to it. Author, dedicatee, and audience should thus be seen as standing in an active relationship to one another, and the latter two not as mere passive recipients of the work.[37] The notion of performance can also be fruitfully extended to draw attention to the presentation of the written work: the organization of letter collections, the choice of a genre or the mixing of genres, and the attempt to obscure the written nature of a text are all conscious choices made with the intention to achieve certain aims in the audience, and can be understood as performances in absence of the author.[38]

(2) *The rhetorical and literary construction of reality*. Literature never is a mere mirror of reality, but, contrary to a commonplace assumption, it not only

37 See the recent revaluation of Constantine's role by R.P.H. Green, "Constantine as Patron of Christian Latin Poetry," *Studia Patristica* 46 (2010), 65–76. L. Van Hoof, "Performing *Paideia*: Literature as an Instrument for Social Promotion in the Fourth Century AD," *The Classical Quarterly* 63 (2013), 387–406 presents several fourth-century case studies illustrating the importance of successfully performing *paideia* in order to obtain social promotion.

38 E.g. L.J. Dorfbauer, "Lernen am Modell in der Spätantike: Eine Interpretation der Saturnalia des Macrobius," *Philologus* 153 (2009), 278–299 on encyclopaedic texts; L. Van Hoof, "Self-Censorship and Self-Fashioning: Gaps in Libanius' Letter Collection," *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 92 (2014) on Libanius' letter collection.

distorts reality but also creates it. Part of literature's performative nature is that it consciously constructs social relationships in the light of the specific aims of a text. Friendship, family, master-pupil relationship, the role of the emperor are but a few of the examples that the chapters in this volume touch upon. As one of us has argued recently, fourth-century complaints about the decline of classical literature should also be read as truly rhetorical statements, namely produced in a given context with specific aims in mind.[39]

(3) *Self-presentation*. Every work of literature generates an image of the author. That image is rarely accidental or unconscious. Various strategies are open to the author: his aim can be to generate a specific social image of himself (a successful teacher, a confidant of the emperor, a master of asceticism, etc.) or to situate himself in a literary tradition (as an innovator in rhetoric, or a better historian).[40] Both are obviously interrelated. As the last examples suggest, such images are often competitive, in the sense that authors may wish to set themselves apart from, and often above, all the rest.[41]

Built around these three interlocking themes, this volume wishes to move back and forth between the textual and the social, in seeing the social as textual and the textual as social. It argues that the category of decline, and even transformation, is not suitable to capture the complex changing position of literature in fourth-century society. One notices an extension of the Second Sophistic nexus between social status and literary prowess to Christian literature and, at the same time, a challenge to the position of traditional *paideia* through the rise of other ways of social promotion. Moreover, like in the first and second century, success was always conditional on a successful performance of culture: the mere claim to it never sufficed and the risk of failure always lurked. If the social role of *paideia*, rhetoric, and literature was continued, extended, and complicated, the discourse about it also seems to change: Christian authors

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39 Van Hoof, "Greek Rhetoric".

40 V. Zarini, "Les préfaces dans la poésie panégyrique de la latinité tardive," in B. Bureau and V. Nicolas, eds., *Commencer et finir dans les littératures antiques* (Paris, 2008), pp. 175–186.

41 Recent work on Christian letter collections has shown how they also fashion the social persona of the author by presenting him in a specific light: Trout, *Paulinus of Nola*; C. Conybeare, *Paulinus Noster: Self and Symbols in the Letters of Paulinus of Nola* (Oxford, 2000); B. Conring, *Hieronymus als Briefschreiber* (Tübingen, 2001); Mratschek, *Der Briefwechsel*; eadem, "Identitätsstiftung aus der Vergangenheit: Zum Diskurs über die trajanische Bildungskultur im Kreis des Sidonius Apollinaris," in T. Fuhrer, ed., *Die christlich-philosophischen Diskurse der Spätantike: Texte, Personen, Institutionen* (Stuttgart, 2008), pp. 363–380; and Cain, *The Letters of Jerome*. A more historical approach can be found in Rebenich, *Hieronymus und sein Kreis*.

espouse the *topos* of modesty, whereas Libanius' self-serving rhetoric of decline has had a lasting impact on scholarship. Effectively, our sources conspire to render difficult our understanding of the social mechanisms underpinning the production and performance of literature. This rhetoric conceals in effect a profound belief in the imaginative power of literature to shape the perception of reality and hence also the way people acted. This volume consciously tries to incorporate most genres represented in fourth century Greek and Latin literature, thus hoping to demonstrate that all genres will profit from the approach proposed here.

4 Summary of Chapters

The volume opens with an introductory chapter by Mark Vessey, who discusses modern periodizations of ancient literature and the views on literature and Late Antiquity implicit therein. Focusing on the *Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur*, he shows that it defines Late Antiquity as the period of Latin, rather than Roman, literature: with the decline of political structures, no particular society can be the point of reference for late antique Latin literature. In this, the *HLL* is indebted to modern national histories of literature that trace the literary history of one particular nation. In fact, Vessey shows that some form of literary history did already exist in the fourth century in the *De viris illustribus* of Jerome, which creates a narrative of preceding literary production in which Jerome himself occupies pride of place.

A first set of papers then asks which role *paideia* and rhetoric still could play in a changing society. Bertrand Lançon demonstrates that literary qualities were still esteemed at the highest level of society: the emperor and his court. The administration actively sought to recruit the very best students of Rome, and established scholars such as Lactantius and Ausonius were called to assume high functions. Panegyric, a literary art, was much appreciated and performed in the fourth century, also by Christian bishops. Even if emperors often have the reputation of not being well trained, exceptions abound, including Julian and the usurpations of a grammaticus, Eugenius, in 392, and of a senator-writer, Attalus, in 409. Literary culture seems to be the place of confluence between the interests of the emperor and those of the men who serve him. But mutual respect did not preclude defiance: sometimes the cohabitation looks forced.

Neil McLynn focuses not on the imperial but on the provincial level: Gregory Nazianzen's close relationship with the governor of Cappadocia, Olympius. Advertized through numerous and dramatic letters in Gregory's corpus, the relationship was exceptional. It originated in the fact that Gregory

had appealed to the governor to solve a stand-off in his own church and to permit him to return after a self-imposed departure in the face of resistance by clerics, heretics, and other bishops. From then onwards, Gregory started to exploit the close relationship with Olympius by advertizing himself as a patron who had access to the governor's ear through the letters that were collected. McLynn argues that we should not see this case as paradigmatic for the fourth century, as if *paideia* simply greased the machinery of the state. Rather, Gregory exploited the relationship so much precisely because "the risks of failure enhanced the gratification of occasional success."

Lieve Van Hoof shows that one classic example taken to illustrate the decline of rhetoric, Libanius' *Oration* 31 *For the Teachers*, actually testifies to a more complex reality. Asking for the situation of his assistant teachers to be improved through the grant of the usufruct of a piece of civic land, the oration clearly seeks to lobby for his assistants. In order to strengthen the appeal of his plea both the alleged poverty of his assistants and the decline of rhetoric are overstressed and should not be taken at face value. Nevertheless, the speech also shows that rhetoric was no longer the only pathway to social position and that its role needed to be defended. Yet that defense takes a rhetorical form, demonstrating that rhetoric was capable of reinventing itself, also in the face of social challenges.

The following set of papers focuses on self-presentation and the role played therein by the artefact of literature, the text. Morwenna Ludlow focuses on how Gregory of Nyssa presents himself as a pupil turned teacher in his orations on Basil and Macrina, but also in his exegetical work. The relationship between pupil and teacher is, in Gregory's depiction, mediated through texts: his own writings both articulate his relationship with his teachers Basil and Macrina and allow him to perpetuate that relationship after their demise. Yet, crucially, the texts and the act of writing also allow Gregory to be transformed from a pupil into a teacher, taking the place of his teachers and spreading their message to a wider audience. Texts thus have an important role in mediating the socially complex encounter between a teacher and a pupil.

John Weisweiler focuses on inconsistencies in the narrative of Ammianus Marcellinus. He argues that we should not see them as signs of the unrevised state of his work or of bias, but as conscious hints to the reader to question the status of the work and the method of historiography itself. Although Ammianus presents himself as a reliable, eye-witness historian, he actually expects the reader to question his authority by inviting the reader, through narrative means, to develop his own interpretation. The instability thus created within the *Res gestae* can be explained in two ways: on the hand, Ammianus can be seen as competing with other historians, who are then unmasked as less

methodologically aware and thus, ultimately, less reliable. On the other, the instability in the narrative can be taken to reflect the instability of the later Roman world: changes of regime were often marked by attempts to undo the narrative of the past of the previous regime and to introduce a new one, shedding doubt on the possibility of getting at the truth.

Already in Weisweiler's paper the issue of the literary construction of reality is raised, and this topic is more explicitly explored in the following group of papers, which focus on how writers create a different literary world in order to influence action in, or perception of, the real world. As Sigrid Mratschek shows, the correspondence of Paulinus of Nola provides an insight into how the power of words, through the clash of Christian discourses with classical forms of communication, evolved as a creative and successful mode of exercising authority. One particular case is discussed, *Epist.* 49, a petition concerning the theft of a stranded ship and of its cargo destined for the imperial granaries. The letter was directed at the *vicarius urbis Romae*, the second highest administrative official of Italy, in order to obtain rehabilitation and compensation for a friendly ship-owner. The request reveals the innovative appropriation of the classical *commendatio* as a strategy to influence opinion in a civil legal case. Paulinus infuses the narrative of the petition with strong Christian imagery: the rescue of the shipwrecked seaman becomes a miracle and a dramatic event in the history of salvation. Paulinus fashions the seaman as an *amicus dei* who gains a new identity as a result of his confrontation with the divine and his being literally touched by God. He is presented to the *vicarius* of Rome not as a socially and legally underprivileged witness who needs to testify under torture in a court case but as a present and an icon of power, a living relic. The vicar is invited to enter this world via an act of imaginative fantasy and to forget the cause for the suit, the impending liability of the ship-owner for the cargo, drowned out by a visual and performative flood of pagan and Christian images.

Clare Coombe argues that Claudian's panegyrical poetry aims at creating a distinct story world in which an idealized and mythical Stilicho can assume a heroic role. The poetic form of the panegyric is thus integral to its message: during public performance of the poetry, the audience would by invited to reassess the real Stilicho in light of the elevated world in which Claudian situates him. Particularly focusing on the depiction of Stilicho as a hero, she shows that wider ideas about the restoration of cosmic harmony underpin the praise of Stilicho.

If Coombe focuses on a mythical world recreated to influence perception of the present, Roald Dijkstra discusses how an idealized past is used to shape contemporary society. Arguing that Latin Christian poets were conscious of

their impact on society, among both the elite and a wider audience, he sets out how they promoted two important issues in Latin Christianity. One was the unity of the church, which was exemplified in the unity of the apostles, either by depicting them as a group or by stressing how individual apostles worked towards the same common good. The other was the primacy of Peter among the apostles, which served as a justification for Roman primacy.

The last chapter, by Peter Van Nuffelen, argues that the connection of social status and succesful performance of rhetoric, typical for the Second Sophistic, can also be found among Christian preachers. He shows that they too were rewarded with gifts and money by patrons. Constantinople in particular offered a platform for aspiring preachers to advance themselves, given the numerous possibilities of patronage by court and elite. As a consequence, preaching had a competitive edge to it: a succesful preacher could steal the crowds and the rewards of his colleague. As shown by the conflict between Severian and John Chrysostom, rhetorical challenge could be the starting point for a wider challenge of the overall authority of the bishop. This final chapter thus invites to look beyond the Christian topoi of modesty and preference for content over style.

5 Acknowledgements

This volume publishes a selection of papers first presented at a workshop held in Ghent and Brussels in September 2010 (*"A magic stronger than the governors' power". Literature and Society in the Fourth Century*), to which some contributions have been added. The organization of the workshop was supported by The Research Council—Flanders and the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts. Both editors also acknowledge the support of the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007–2013) / ERC Grant Agreement n. 313153. We also gratefully acknowledge the help of Dr. Andy Hilkens in editing the bibliography and footnotes of this volume.

CHAPTER 2

Literary History: A Fourth-Century Roman Invention?

Mark Vessey

1 Introduction: Classical and Dark Age Histories

Had the subject of this volume been "Literature and Society in the *Third* Century," the Latin side of the program would have risked being embarrassingly thin and, unless devotees of Nemesianus turned out in force, also predominantly Christian. The exiguousness of third-century Latin literature and the advent of Christian literature are faces of the same debased literary-historiographical coin. Here, for example, is Stephen Harrison, introducing the Blackwell *Companion to Latin Literature*:

> The chronological scope of the book does not imply a derogatory exclusion or lower valuing of post-200 Latin literature, whether pagan or Christian, and I greatly admire literary histories ... which cover all Latin literature up to the Carolingian period. But the beginning of Christian Latin literature about A.D. 200 with Tertullian and Minucius Felix is a major watershed, and I resolved on this as a stopping-point so as not to increase dramatically the size and diversity of the book. As a result the volume reflects the range of Latin literature commonly taught in universities, from the Early Republic to the High Empire, perhaps regrettably reinforcing the canonical status of the period.[1]

The unease of that paragraph does its author credit. Fewer methodological anxieties disturb the no less companionable Oxford volume on *Literature in the Roman World* edited by Oliver Taplin, in which a last chapter by Michael Dewar elegantly justifies the editor's introductory statements that "in 300 CE literature was still being widely read and copied, even though not a great deal was being created," and that "by 550 CE, in the West entirely, and in the East largely, a literary 'dark age' had closed in."[2] The challenge posed to "classical"

1 S. Harrison, ed., *A Companion to Latin Literature* (Oxford, 2005), p. 2.

2 O. Taplin, ed., *Literature in the Roman World* (Oxford, 2000), p. xxiv.

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literary historiography by a failure of literary productivity discernible—in Latin, conspicuous—as early as the year 300 is nimbly addressed by Dewar, who begins his essay by contrasting the situations and styles of Apuleius and Augustine, then returns to the "innovation and creativity … [already] to be found … in the pages of Christian authors" from the time of Tertullian and Minucius Felix. He adds:

> Our view of things is no doubt skewed by the relative dearth of traditional ["pagan"] literature surviving from, above all, the troubled third century. There is little worth recording, apart from a learned didactic treatise on hunting and some graceful bucolic poems by Nemesianus, a few poems in light genres from the *Latin Anthology*, a learned hotch-potch of geographical and ethnographical data by Solinus, some handbooks of medicine and traditional moralizing, and a whimsical parody of legal language called *The Piglet's Last Will and Testament* [*Testamentum Porcelli*].[3]

The strategies of these two recent, popular-scholarly literary histories draw attention again to a longstanding historiographical problem. The problem can be understood as a historically specific instance of the problem of *all* literary history, which in turn can be phrased as a question: What kinds of *story* do the contents of the archive—including items whose "documentary" value may have to be partly discounted because of their "literary" character—permit us to tell and to trust? In this case: What would be a credible narrative of the course of Roman and/or Latin literature *after* the High Empire? These questions once formulated, we recognize that our answers to them will be crucially affected by our (prior) assumptions about the the meaning and application of the term "literature."[4] An inference evidently common to the volumes produced by Harrison and Taplin, among others of their sort, is that literature—meaning *a* literature—should have a visible *unity* over time; in other words, that it will have *an* history and that the history will be one of more or less *continuous* production. The difficulty succinctly identified by Harrison is one of managing the "diversity" of phenomena needing to be accounted for in a synoptic history of Latin literature that would advance past the "watershed" of 200 A.D. Harrison

3 M. Dewar, "Culture Wars: Latin Literature from the Second Century to the End of the Classical Era," in O. Taplin, ed., *Literature in the Roman World*, pp. 235–261, at p. 243.

4 See further M. Vessey, "Literature, Literary Histories, Latin Late Antiquity: The State of a Question," in in J. Stenger, ed., *Spätantike Konzeptionen von Literatur* (Heidelberg, forthcoming), and "Literature, Patristics, Early Christian Writing," in S. Ashbrook Harvey and D.G. Hunter, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 42–65.

himself evades that difficulty by closing his volume on the safely "pagan" side of the watershed. Taplin and Dewar surmount it by positing a drawn-out end-phase to what they call the "classical era," so that the rising productivity of Latin Christian writers in the Roman world can cover an awkward gap in the record of "traditional" literary activity after ca. 200, even if it cannot extend the life of "classical" Latin literature beyond ca. 450, or at the latest ca. 550 (by which date, of course, the strictly *Roman* world of their book's title has contracted significantly in the West). In both cases, the narratable *unity-in-continuity* of a Roman literature of Latin expression is preserved. In both cases, the preservation comes at a certain price, either reinforcing a time-honoured pedagogical canon (half-regretted by Harrison) or requiring the narrative expedient, sooner or later, of a supervening "dark age" (cheerfully beckoned by Taplin). In neither case is "late antiquity" invoked as a period-concept.

These are familiar schemes and devices, for which a host of scholarly narratives of (ancient) Roman and/or Latin literary history, recent and less so, could equally well be cited.[5] I want to take the opportunity of this volume to consider one other (non-Anglophone) presentation of the facts, of a different order of historiographical complexity, with an eye to sharpening the fourth-century period-focus of our inquiry.

2 *HLL*: A Late Twentieth-Century "Crisis" of Literary History

In 1997, the Munich firm of C.H. Beck published Volume 4 of the new *Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike* (hereafter *HLL*), an eight-volume reference-work launched under the editorial direction of the Konstanz classicists Peter Lebrecht Schmidt and (the late) Reinhart Herzog. The titles assigned to the three chronologically preceding volumes in the scheme of the handbook were fairly anodyne: "Literature of the Archaic Period," "The Age of Cicero and Augustus," "Early Principate." Then something happened. Volume 4, for the years 117 to 284, was emblazoned *Die Literatur des Umbruchs: Von der römischen zur christlichen Literatur*—literally, "Literature of (the) Radical Change: From Roman to Christian Literature."[6]

5 Elaine Fantham concludes her stylish *Roman Literary Culture: From Cicero to Apuleius* (Baltimore, 1996) on a melodramatic note: "In contemplating the state of Latin literary culture [after the second century], we might well be tempted to echo the despairing cry attributed to Julian, last of the pagan emperors: *Vicisti Galilaee*. The compelling power of Christianity would shape the literature of the Latin-speaking world for centuries to come" (p. 263).

6 K. Sallmann, ed., *Die Literatur des Umbruchs: Von der römischen zur christlichen Literatur, 117 bis 284 n. Chr.* (München, 1997) [= Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike, ed.

The French translators of this volume seem to have taken fright at *Die Literatur des Umbruchs*, opting instead for the more comfortable *L'âge de transition* (with no further mention of "literature" outside the series-title).[7] It is clear, however, that "der Umbruch" is what the historiographical plot of the strictly *late antique* section of the Herzog-Schmidt *Handbuch* requires. Volume 5, covering the years 284 to 374, edited by Herzog and prefaced by his magisterial "Einführung in die lateinische Literatur der Spätantike," is entitled *Restauration und Erneuerung* ("Restoration and Renewal").[8] Something had been disrupted, upset, or, at the very least, precariously suspended, and since this is the handbook of (a) literature, that something must have involved (the) literature itself. If "Literature of the Upset" sounds too neurotic in English, we could always render the title of Volume 4 as "Literature of the Crisis," or, more adventurously, as "The Crisis of Literature." According to the original subtitle, this crisis would also be historically associated or associable with the advent of a *Christian* literature.

A decade or so ago one might have been reluctant to speak of anything so retrograde as a "crisis of the Roman empire" in the company of scholars of late Roman history. Now, however, that some of those scholars have partly rehabilitated the idioms of cultural crisis (and collapse) in respect of the Roman Empire in the West, it may be a good time to reconsider how the diagnoses of crisis-points respectively in the histories of Rome's empire, of "the West," and of "literature" have been coordinated.[9] HLL offers a privileged vantage-point for such a review.

The tension between catastrophist and transformationalist histories of the late, later and post-Roman worlds is keenly felt in the volume of the handbook

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R. Herzog and P. Lebrecht Schmidt, Vol. 4]. For "der Umbruch" as a term of art in the new historiography of late antiquity, see M. van Uytfanghe, "L'Antiquité tardive, le Haut Moyen Âge et la seconde moitié du XXe siècle: Affinités réelles our imaginaires?," *Didactica Classica Gandensia* 19 (1979), 139–182, esp. 140–142 and 150 ("un temps de mutations profondes … une *Umbruchsepoche*").

7 *L'âge de transition: 117–284*, trans. F. Heim *et al.* (Turnhout, 2000). The series-title of the French version, *Nouvelle histoire de la littérature latine*, reclaims the genre of literary "history" explicitly disclaimed by the German original.

8 See n. 15 below.

9 See, for example, P.J. Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (London, 2005); B. Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization* (Oxford, 2005); J. O'Donnell, *The Ruin of the Roman Empire: A New History* (New York, 2008); and for considerations of literary history in relation to wider social and cultural rupture, J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Decline and Fall of the Roman City* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 223–248, 318–342. M. Vessey, "407 and All That: Insular Late Roman Historiography and the Literary-Historical Turn," *Journal of Late Antiquity* (2009), 30–48 already touches on some of the issues raised below.

devoted to "der Umbruch" or "la transition," and not only in the textual variants of its title-page. Its editor, Klaus Sallmann, begins his introduction by stating that the re-establishment of the Roman Empire under Diocletian signalled the end of the preceding "crisis of the empire" (*Reichskrise*), but then immediately cautions that the structural changes undergone by Roman ways of life between the second and late third centuries ought not to be seen, as they were by Edward Gibbon, "as a crisis or even an agony, but rather"—and "despite the dangerous developments of the third century"—"as the metamorphosis of Roman antiquity into a political, social and religious system that we are accustomed to call Late Antiquity."[10] A few pages later he is nevertheless obliged to cast up the usual literary-historical accounts:

> With Septimius Severus this colourful literary scene of the Second Sophistic begins to fade. Septimius Serenus sets a full stop to poetry, Julius Romanus to grammar, Gargilius Martialis and Cetius Faventinus to technical literature. It is true that, in the meantime, Christian literature had established itself. Only works that are difficult to date, such as those of a Cornelius Labeo, Julius Romanus or Terentianus, could plausibly fall within the void that is generally recognized between 238 and 284, but they would still not establish any literary continuity for this period (*kein literarisches Kontinuum begründen*).[11]

Having completed his introductory task, the editor turns the volume over to his fellow contributors, who are largely spared the necessity of addressing problems of literary continuity over the *longue* or even relatively *courte durée* by the convenience of having the volume's bibliographical subject-matter divided along literary-generic and quasi-demographic lines: "Traditionally Oriented Literature," "Prose of the Latin Sophistic," "Beginnings of Latin Christian Literature," and "Poetry." As the sole exponent of something like Christian poetry, Commodian makes an anomalous entry in the final compartment (and, since his dates remain controversial, may not even belong there).

Curiously enough, it is in the last paragraph of the section for "Christian Poetry" created specifically for the author of the *Instructiones* and *Carmen Apologeticum* (which are treated by Eberhard Heck) that Peter Lebrecht Schmidt delivers the epilogue on this volume dedicated to the crisis-laden or crisis-borne transition "from Roman literature to Christian literature."

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10 *HLL* 4: 1. All citations of *HLL* are of the original German-language volumes. Translations where given are my own.

11 *HLL* 4: 8.

The actual topic of Schmidt's discourse, however, is not *that* critical turn but another, namely the one already identified by Herzog in Volume 5 of the *HLL*—the first in the series to appear (in 1989)—as distinctive of the whole "late antique" phase of the Latin literary history embraced by the *Handbuch*. This will be the critical turn between "*Roman* literature" and "*Latin* literature."

Schmidt for his part is in no doubt about the seriousness of the "crisis of literature" attendant upon the third-century "crisis of empire," nor does he let himself be distracted for a moment by the new productivity of Christian writers, no matter how freakish in some cases (Commodian). His Konstanz predecessor Manfred Fuhrmann may have exaggerated when he described the period between 238 and 284 as "an almost entirely literature-free interval of two generations," but only slightly. According to Schmidt (and Herzog, as we shall see), Fuhrmann was right to insist on the era of Diocletian as inaugurating a recovery in the fortunes of literature. He was right, too, to emphasize the continuing eclipse during this period of the city of Rome, not only as a political centre but also as a cultural capital, a process under way since the second century. Occurring as it did in these circumstances of the post-*Rome*-ness, so to speak, of Roman political and cultural life, the Diocletianic literary recovery could be said to usher in a "Latin literature of late antiquity" that was structurally and sociologically distinct from the "Roman literature of antiquity."[12]

12 *HLL* 4: 637–639 ("Von der römischen zur lateinischen Literatur: Rückblick und Ausblick"), at p. 639: "... Insofern scheint es begründbar, gegenüber der *römischen* Literatur der Antike von der *lateinischen* Literatur der Spätantike zu reden und auch in diesem Sinne die Epochengrenze zwischen Bd. 4 und Bd. 5 unseres Handbuches zu markieren"—with essential bibliography on the question of cultural- and literary-historical continuity between the second and fourth centuries. The key reference is M. Fuhrmann, "Die lateinische Literatur der Spätantike: Ein literarhistorischer Beitrag zum Kontinuitätsproblem," *Antike und Abendland* 13 (1967), 56–79 (reprinted in M. Fuhrmann, *Brechungen: Wirkungsgeschichtliche Studien zur antik-europäischen Bildungstradition* [Stuttgart, 1982], pp. 47–74, 206–214). The literary-historical importance of the third-century rupture had been underlined again by Fuhrmann, "Die Epochen der griechischen und der römischen Literatur," in B. Cerquiglini and H.U. Gumbrecht, eds., *Der Diskurs der Literatur- und Sprachhistorie: Wissenschaftsgeschichte als Innovationsvorgabe* (Frankfurt, 1983), pp. 537–555, at p. 552: "Während des halben Jahrhunderts völliger Literaturlosigkeit ging der verhältnissmäßig freiheitliche Staat, den Augustus begründet hat, der sogennante Prinzipat, unter, und etwas Neues trat an seine Stelle: der Dominat, d. h. ein absolutistisches und streng bürokratisch organisiertes Zwangsregiment. *Eigentümlicherweise kommt dieser handgreifliche Zusammenhang in den gängigen Literaturgeschichten fast nie zum Vorschein*" (emphasis added). See also the methodological reflections in Fuhrmann, *Die Antike und ihre Vermittler* (Konstanz, 1969), especially his critique of an ideological and disciplinary reconstruction of ancient *Römertum* ("Romanity") arising in 1920s Germany

This literary-historical periodization of Fuhrmann's is fundamental to the project of the *Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike*, which was conceived from the start as a replacement for the outdated and outmoded *Geschichte der römischen Literatur* of Schanz, Hosius and Krüger.[13] Whereas the title of that earlier work used the adjectival form of the name "Rome" to define the entirety of literature in Latin down to the time of Justinian, according to Herzog and Schmidt the cultural-political demise of the city of Rome by the time of the Tetrarchy conditioned the arrival of (a) "Latin literature" as such. In the former case (Schanz *et al.*), the origin defined the sequels. In the latter (Herzog-Schmidt), a late development implicitly frames the whole. Latin literature itself, and hence the possibility of a handbook that would assist in the (retrospective) narration of its total history in antiquity, could at this point be envisaged as in some sense a discursive *product* of late antiquity . . . It is safe to say, in any case, that the project of a revized "Schanz" arose in large part from the desire of specialists in the newly energized field of the study of Latin texts of late antiquity to see that particular span of literary history accommodated on up-to-date terms in the scheme of a comprehensive reference-work. It was no accident that Volume 5 of the new *Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike* was the first published. And it is telling that Volume 1[14] contains no substantial introduction or preliminary methodological reflections to set

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and persisting in educational milieux down to the present: "Diese Anstrengungen gipfelten in dem emphatisch verkündeten Idealbilde vom 'Römischen Wesen,' auch kurz 'Römertum' genannt—man kann diese späte Blüte romantischer Volksgeist-Theorien als die noch gegenwärtig gültige oder jedenfalls weit verbreitete Berufsideologie des deutschen Lateinlehrers bezeichnen . . . Doch in der Landschaft des nachhitlerischen Deutschland sollte die Doktrin vom 'Römertum' eher wie eine gespenstische Ruine wirken; sie gehört zu den zahlreichen Zeugnissen eines überspannten Idealismus, deren unbesehene Weitergabe sich schwerlich noch verantworten läst" (pp. 28–29). Fuhrmann's polemic on this point included an impassioned plea for the expansion of Latin (and Greek) studies beyond the limits of "Altphilologie," not only to embrace the study of ancient *Christian* writers but also to link up with medieval and modern literary studies across languages.

13 Brief presentation of the project by one of its main architects for the period of late antiquity: J. Fontaine, "Postclassicisme, Antiquité tardive, Latin des chrétiens: L'évolution de la problématique d'une histoire de la littérature romaine du IIIe au VIe siècle depuis Schanz," *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé* (1984), 195–212 (at 195–196). See also P.L. Schmidt's "Einleitung in das Gesamtwerk," *HLL* 1 (cited in following note), pp. xli–xlvii.

14 W. Suerbaum, ed., *Die archaische Literatur: Von den Anfängen bis Sullas Tod* (München, 2002) [= Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike, ed. R. Herzog and P. Lebrecht Schmidt, Vol. 1]. For critical reflections on the conception of this volume, see D. Feeney, "The Beginnings of a Literature in Latin," *Journal of Roman Studies* 95 (2005), 226–240.

beside Herzog's programmatic "Introduction to the Latin literature of late antiquity."[15]

Now more than twenty years old, those dense paragraphs of Herzog's at the beginning of *HLL* 5 are still the proper starting-line for any methodologically serious discussion of (the) Latin literature of late antiquity (which in the scheme of the *Handbuch* reaches to the early eighth century), as indeed they might also be for a reconsideration of the meanings of "Latin literature" as a disciplinary concept. As recent scholarship by literary Hellenists has made us more aware of the stakes of "Greek literature" as an aspect of Hellenism under the Roman Empire, so we might now begin to work out how the deceptively symmetrical category of "Latin literature"—or of something like the *historically extended discursive unity* that we are accustomed to calling by that name—ever came to be charged with a power of cultural definition so far in excess of the claims that Cicero, say, or Aulus Gellius would have made for *litterae Latinae*.[16]

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15 R. Herzog, ed., *Restauration und Erneuerung: Die lateinische Literatur von 284 bis 374 n. Chr*. (München, 1989) [= Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike, ed. Reinhart Herzog and Peter Lebrecht Schmidt, Vol. 5], pp. 1–44, followed by the more routine "Einleitung zu Band 5: Restauration und Erneuerung (284–374 n. Chr.)" (pp. 44–51). Note especially the initial statement of scope: "Die Darstellung [in vols. 5–8, covering the period 284–735 A.D.] folgt mit dieser Begrenzung einer Periodisierung der Epoche, wie sie auch in der Geschichtsforschung vertreten wird. Sie folgt ihr, weil sie die Literatur dieser Zeit als die erste *lateinische*, die erste nachrömische Literatur Europas auffaßt und sie als Einheit begreift. Die Einheit kann historisch durch eine in sich geschlossene Spanne, die *Spätantike*, vergegenwärtigt werden" (2). The period-concept is justified for literary history in terms of "cultural continuity" *within* the period extending from the Tetrarchy to the early eighth century (pp. 2–11 and following). The introduction closes on a bibliographical survey of the literary-historiographical treatment of this period by classical philologists, beginning with a reference to Fuhrmann, "Die lateinische Literatur der Spätantike" (see n. 12 above) and ending on a citation of Fuhrmann, ed., *Christianisme et formes littéraires de l'Antiquité tardive en Occident* (Geneva, 1977).

16 For the earlier history, see M.W. Bloomer, *Latinity and Literary Society at Rome* (Philadelphia, 1997); T.N. Habinek, *The Politics of Latin Literature: Writing, Identity and Empire in Ancient Rome* (Princeton, 1998). J. Farrell, *Latin Language and Latin Culture from Ancient to Modern Times* (Cambridge, 2001) provides the long view, and F. Waquet, *Latin or the Empire of the Sign: From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century* (New York, 2001) an account of modern developments. But what would the "late antique" chapter of a history of Latinity look like? For a fresh approach to the problem of "literature" in relation to the period-concept "late antiquity," responding to recent postulations of a 'Third Sophistic' and with Greek texts primarily in view, see Averil Cameron, "Culture Wars: Late

HLL 5 and the original early-1980s project of the *HLL* as a "new Schanz" may be said to mark the moment at which a periodization (*die Spätantike*, "Late Antiquity") that had long been current in German historical scholarship, and in the course of the '60s and '70s had begun to catch on in other (including Anglo-American) historiographical communities as well, impinged, if not directly on the *writing* of Roman/Latin literary history—since the *HLL* did not purport to be a literary history, but rather a handbook of the literature—then on its overall conceptualization.[17] While it would be fanciful to ascribe the continuing *in*completeness of the *HLL*[18]—its own lingering crisis, so to speak, as a scholarly and publishing venture—to the historiographically disruptive sense of epoch (essentially Fuhrmann's, as developed by Herzog and Schmidt) on which it was founded, there is nonetheless an irony in the current state of the work, consisting, as it has since 2002, of an account of archaic beginnings (Vol. 1) that remain without "classical" or other sequels until the era of the upset and radical transformation of Roman literature in Latin (Vol. 4), beyond which a genetically *related* but now historically *separated* "post-Roman," if not also "post-classical," Latin literature of late antiquity launches itself (Vol. 5) into a still uncharted future. If a moral were to be drawn from the story of *HLL*, not about the familiar perils of large-scale scholarly projects in our own times, but about the project of a "history of Latin literature" at this late date, what might it be?

3 The Belatedness of Literary History

As we have seen, the *HLL* was designed to replace an early twentieth-century reference-work for "Roman" literary history, namely the multi-volume *Geschichte der römischen Literatur* (published as part of Iwan von Müller's systematic *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*). Conceived in a spirit of German-French scholarly amity that could have no use for German nationalist myths of an ideal *Römertum* of the type stigmatized by Fuhrmann (above, n. 12), its first volume appeared on the eve of the fall of the Berlin Wall. However pragmatic its scholarly intent, the *HLL* was also to be the work of individuals who had

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Antiquity and Literature," forthcoming in C. Freu and S. Janniard, eds., *Mélanges J.-M. Carrié* (Turnhout).

17 That said, as Feeney observes with respect to *HLL* 1, "a volume such as this cannot escape being a narrative of a kind [and] will inevitably be read as a literary history" ("The Beginnings of a Literature in Latin," p. 227).

18 At the time of writing, Vols. 2–3, 6–8 of the work were still unpublished.

grown up in the aftermath of the Second World War and who, whether they were in the habit of citing them or not, would have been generally sympathetic to the pan-European, post-nationalist visions of "Western" literature graphically projected by Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (original German edition 1946) and Ernst Robert Curtius's *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (1948). Both of those, however, were deeply singular books—"literary histories" (insofar as they were such) composed in idioms and genres not practised before or since, improvised in a time of emergency to bridge the abyss within European culture that had suddenly opened at their authors' feet. Auerbach's virtuoso use of textual excerpts and micronarratives as points-of-departure (*Ansatzpunkte*) for large-scale literary critical and historical constructions and Curtius's quasi-encyclopaedic emplotment of rhetorical *topoi* were as much engines for the destruction of older (and, as they had proved in some cases, pernicious) literary historicisms as they were to be enablers of new styles of literary criticism—and, in due course, of new literary historicisms too. The vocation of the *HLL*, by contrast, was to replace a series of volumes in a reference library for students of Greek and Roman antiquity.

The *HLL* was thus bound to observe the lower-order unities on which the higher-order unities of modern literary histories have traditionally been raised: those of authors and their works, of literary genres (*Gattungen*), and of periods. With respect to all of these, the original project was scrupulous to the point of danger. To judge from the inaugural *HLL* 5, the new handbook as *Gesamtwerk* would be distinguished by the richness of its bibliographical data, the subtlety of its editors' and contributors' handling of traditional taxonomies of genre, and the quality of attention given to issues of periodization. Yet it would still necessarily be (a handbook for) the history of *a* literature—if no longer of a factitiously *Roman* literature, then of a "Latin literature of antiquity." Therein would consist its ultimate unity, which would be the unity of a single literature *continuous* through time and space from its most remote beginnings (howsoever distinguished from Greek or other precedent) to its nearest temporal limits (howsoever marked with respect to later "literary" productions—whether in Latin, Romance languages or other vernaculars).

As we have also seen, however, there was from the start something paradoxical about the unity-in-continuity of the literature framed by the *HLL*. The paradox is already formulated in Herzog's announcement of the subject-matter of Vols. 5–8 as "the first *Latin*, the first post-Roman literature of Europe" ("die erste *lateinische*, die erste nachrömische Literatur Europas"; n. 15 above). "Latin literature," like "Greek literature," is a locution so familiar as normally to require no commentary when used as a subject-title. But in the prolegomena

to HLL 5–8 its referent is made doubly strange, first by its post-position with respect to an earlier "Roman literature," with which—by clear implication—it could no longer be fully continuous, and secondly by its insertion among the (later) literatures of Europe.[19] We understand that there had already been *Roman* literature(s) in Greek and Latin, and that there would in time be (other) distinct *European* literatures, both Latin and "vernacular." As the *gens Romana* and its political progeny had expressed and defined a collective identity in and by (a) "literature," so in time would a *gens Anglorum*, a *gens Francorum*, etc. Such are the routine assumptions of modern "literary history," the means by which it has traditionally secured its higher-level unities.[20] But what strange race, as late as late antiquity, could have given rise to a *Latin* literature?

The late modern idea of a historically narratable "literature" has of course consistently been that of a discursive unity somehow homologous with the ethno-cultural-political unity of the nation.[21] Although one influential account of the rise of modern nationhood attributes much to the horizontal-temporal or "cross-time" imagined community of the nation, that emphasis cannot obscure the role of chronological, as it were "down-time" narratives of national continuity—those by which the living seek to assert and sustain a genealogical sense of community with the dead.[22] Modern notions of *a* national

19 Note, however, that in the overall scheme of the *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft* published by C.H. Beck HLL 5–8 still fall within the division *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*.

20 The last major figure in the projected scheme of the HLL would be Bede, author of an ecclesiastical history of the *gens Anglorum*, reputed translator of St. John's Gospel into English—and narrator of the miraculous performance of the cowherd Caedmon's vernacular hymn of creation, which is regularly reprised near the beginning of textbook anthologies of "English Literature." For a new literary-historiographical framing of Bede, see J.M.H. Smith, 'Writing in Britain and Ireland, *c.* 400 to *c.* 800," the first chapter in C.A. Lees, ed., *The Cambridge History of Early Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 19–35.

21 D. Perkins, *Is Literary History Possible?* (Baltimore, 1992), p. 2: "All of the most important literary histories in the nineteenth century were narratives, and they traced the phases or sometimes the birth and/or death of a suprapersonal entity. This entity might be a genre, such as poetry; the "spirit" of an age, such as classicism or romanticism; or the character or "mind" of a race, region, people, or nation as reflected in its literature." Scholarship of the past three or four decades in literary theory and postcolonial studies has taken its distance from such assumptions; see, e.g., L. Hutcheon, "Rethinking the National Model," in L. Hutcheon and M.J. Valdés, eds., *Rethinking Literary History: A Dialogue on Theory* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 3–49.

22 B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (London, 1991), to be contrasted with M. de Certeau, *The Writing of History*,

literature—and hence of discrete national literatures that might be compared with one another, or even ultimately submerged in a World Literature beyond distinctions of language, race or nation—were born of the racially speculative European theories of nationhood of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century.[23] They were thus caught up from the start in the very same dynamics of *latterday* European ethnogenesis that have recently proved so rich a field of reflection among historians of late Roman antiquity and the early medieval West.[24] Just as the wishfully long nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century histories of modern or aspirational European nation-states drew heavily upon the narrative genealogies of the earliest "narrators of barbarian history,"[25] the

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trans. T. Conley (New York, 1988), which takes cues for its framing chapter on "Writings and Histories" from Jules Michelet's *Histoire de France* (completed in 1867) and Michel Foucault's notion of "archaeology," itself partly a *mise-à-jour* of Nietzsche's *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* ("Untimely Meditations") of 1873–1876.

23 J. Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History* (Amsterdam, 2006), pp. 93–126. See also M. Fuhrmann, "Die Geschichte der Literaturgeschichts schreibung von den Anfängen bis zum 19. Jahrhundert," in H.-U. Gumbrecht and B. Cerquiglini, eds., *Der Diskurs der Literatur- und Sprachhistorie*, pp. 49–72, at 61: "Die Epoche des Neuhumanismus und des beginnenden Historismus fiel zusammen mit dem Erstarken des nationalsprachlichen Prinzips: Latein hörte auf, als allgemeines Verständigungsmittel der Gelehrten zu dienen, und die alten Sprachen verloren die propädeutische Funktion, die sie bis dahin an den Universitäten wahrgenommen hatten." For the beginnings of "nationally" conceived literary histories of ancient Greece and Rome, see now M. Hose, "Die Erfindung einer modernen griechischen und römischen Literaturgeschichte: Gewinne und Verluste," in H. Balancen and T. Valk, eds., *Weimarer Klassik im Prozess der Moderne* (Göttingen, forthcoming), which identifies Friedrich August Wolf's *Geschichte der Römischen Literatur* (1787) as marking the crucial break with the formerly prevailing catalogue-style presentation of Latin literature in works such as Johann Albert Fabricius's *Bibliotheca Latina*: "Doch ist entscheidend der Wechsel vom traditionellen Adjektiv 'Lateinisch' . . . zu 'Römisch'. Denn damit war ein neuer Fokus gewonnen: Rom und die Römer, was automatisch zur Folge hat, dass Wolfs Literaturgeschichte mit dem Sturz des Romulus Augustulus 476 n. Chr., also dem Ende der politischen Einheit, schließt. Mittelalter und Neuzeit bleiben außer Betracht."

24 From an abundant literature: W. Pohl and H. Reimitz, eds., *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800* (Leiden, 1998); P.J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton, 2002); H.-W. Goetz, J. Jarnut and W. Pohl, eds., *Regna et Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World* (Leiden, 2003); and, with wider horizons, W. Pohl, C. Gantner and R. Payne, eds., *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World: The West, Byzantium and the Islamic World, 300–1100* (Abingdon, 2012).

25 W. Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History* (A.D. *550–800*)*: Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, 1988).

newly ambitious literary histories of the same European nations based their master-narratives on bio-bibliographical data derived through eighteenth-century *historiae litterarum* from the compilations of Renaissance antiquarians, Reformation-era controversial ecclesiastical histories, and the catalogues of medieval monastic libraries.

As those national genealogies needed to be kept continuous, so did the records of a nation's literary creativity or ability to reproduce itself discursively in verbal—including written—forms. Narrative literary history abhors a chronological vacuum. And yet, from the moment it established itself among Italian humanists of the Quattrocento, *Latin* literary history was to be distinguished from other potential species of the genre by the chasm that yawned in it between the last traces of the classicizing poets and orators of the Roman Empire and the first glimmerings of a new dawn in the generation or so before Petrarch.[26] The only historical way to avoid staring into such a nearly-millennial void would be to halt the course of Latin literary history safely before the onset of Christian writing in Latin. And so eventually it came about that a canon already justified on aesthetic criteria was reinforced by a truncated scheme of literary *tradition*, and modern Anglophone histories of Latin literature assumed the compact ("classical") dimensions still observed by the Blackwell *Companion*.[27] Ironically, if a five-hundred-year history of Latin literature could serve as an exemplar of the ideal correspondence between the discursive unity of a literature and the political and cultural unity of a nation, it did so despite (or possibly because of) its inability to match the narrative sweep of the much longer literary histories retrojected in the nineteenth century on behalf of modern European nation-states, which typically located the origins of their respective "literatures" in the pre-literate mists of the Dark Ages. In the context of nationalist literary historicism, "classical" Latin literature was at once the hyperliterate, colonially oppressive "other" from which vernacular literary traditions needed to detach themselves at the start and the suprahistorical norm to which they aimed as their *telos*.

How, though, did "literary" history ever come to play this leading role in the autoethnography of modern nations? While it is impossible to address that question squarely in a paper for a volume such as this, it may well be that a

26 Select texts and references in M. Vessey, "Cities of the Mind: Renaissance Views of Early Christian Culture and the End of Antiquity," in P. Rousseau, ed., *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Chichester, 2009), pp. 43–58, esp. 46–56.

27 For the Enlightenment-era and romantic conditioning of "tradition" as a literary-historiographical concept, with glances back to late antiquity, see S. Prickett, *Modernity and the Reinvention of Tradition: Backing into the Future* (Cambridge, 2009).

fourth-century Christian sense of literary epoch was one critical (!) factor in later developments.

4 Epilogue: The Beginnings of Literary History in Latin Late Antiquity

The nearest thing the Romans had to a genre that we might think of as "literary history" were chronologically serial encomia of famous men of letters. The best extant instance is the almost completely preserved treatise *De grammaticis et rhetoribus* of Suetonius, which seems to have formed part of a larger ensemble *De viris illustribus*. Suetonius pursued the anecdotal history of Latin grammarians and rhetoricians from the "origins" of those professions at Rome down to his own time. His notices on some of the more important Latin poets, presumed by scholars to have come from a parallel *De poetis*, were adopted by the grammatical curriculum, undergoing revision over time as adjuncts to the corpora of the authors in question and surviving into the later medieval tradition of *accessus ad auctores*. Those repurposings aside, there are no clear signs of any major updating of Suetonius' bio-bibliographical works by later hands, and few signs even of its circulation in late antiquity. For that matter, nothing in our sources suggests that Roman literary education in the fourth-century West entailed any kind of orientation to what we would think of as a "classical tradition," in the sense of a continuous series of writers in various genres extending from a remote to the most recent past, within which the select, curricular or "canonical" authors of classroom study would be encompassed and historically situated. Cicero (in the *Brutus*) and Quintilian (in Book 10 of the *Institutio oratoria*) had, like Suetonius, provided more or less chronological lists or "canons" of authors worthy of imitation, down to their own generation or the one before. Odd though it is to relate, the "modern" spectacle of a chronologically array of the authors of "classical" Latin literature, beginning in the third century B.C. and extending as far as the late second century A.D. is first presented to us—and, so far as we can now tell, was first staged in antiquity—by Jerome's version and interpolation of the Eusebian *Chronici canones*.[28]

28 Reacting with characteristically constructive chauvinism to what he saw as Eusebius' inevitable "Greek" bias, Jerome made a point of boosting the "Roman" historical content of the work, notably by inserting a quantity of literary-historical notices on Latin authors, derived mainly—it has been inferred—from Suetonius' *De Viris Illustribus*. The long-term significance of Jerome's *Chronicle* for Latin literary historiography was noted already by P. Lehmann, "Literaturgeschichte im Mittelalter," in his *Erforschung*

Jerome's *Chronicle*, compiled in Constantinople ca. 380,[29] is the earliest surviving text to exhibit a run of Latin authors from the Middle Republic to the Antonines—in this case, from Ennius to Fronto, whose *floruit* is marked at the year 164 A.D. The next named writer in Latin is Tertullian (208 A.D.), and only Christian writers follow. For a chronological presentation of those and other Christian writers as forming a distinct class or canon, with its own continuous history running from Apostolic times to the present, Jerome's readers would soon afterwards have been able to refer to his *De viris illustribus* or *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis*, a work modelled primarily on Suetonius, compiled in Bethlehem in 392/3, and combining bio-bibliographical materials derived from Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* with the fruits of the author's own somewhat haphazard researches.[30]

In Jerome's self-centred, Christian providentialist, Roman triumphalist—and yet, as it may now seem, also presciently *post*-Roman—universal projections, we discover the elements of a narrative literary historiography already distantly answering to modern expectations: observance of the unities of authors/works; sensitivity to questions of genre; attention to chronology and the serial arrangement of data. *Pace* some modern commentators, "Christian literature" was not something that supervened in the second century to fill an awkward gap that Jerome's expansion of Eusebius' *Chronicle* would one day expose in the records of literature in Latin. The artefact of a late fourth-century, *Latin* Roman imagination, it was simultaneous and synergistic with the production—by Jerome and his peers—of a serviceably contemporary "classical" literary past.[31]

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des Mittelalters: Ausgewählte Abhandlungen und Aufsätze, 5 vols. (Stuttgart, 1959–1962), 1: 82–113, at 91–92, and is implicitly recognized at *HLL* 1: 588–594 ("Zeittafel zur römischen Literaturgeschichte 240–78 v. Chr."). See also E.R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, 1953), p. 447; M. Fuhrmann, "Geschichte der Literaturgeschichts schreibung," pp. 56–57. The positions sketched in this "Epilogue" are based on arguments that I have set out in two earlier essays and am developing in other work. See my "Reinventing History: Jerome's *Chronicle* and the Writing of the Post-Roman West," in S. McGill, C. Sogno and E.J. Watts, eds., *From the Tetrarchs to the Theodosians: Later Roman History and Culture* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 265–289, and "Augustine among the Writers of the Church," in M. Vessey, ed., *A Companion to Augustine* (Chichester, 2012), pp. 240–254.

29 Ed. R. Helm in *GCS* 47, 3rd edn. (Berlin, 1984).

30 Ed. A. Ceresa-Gastaldo (Florence, 1988).

31 See now Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford, 2011), the literary-historical implications of which are tentatively explored in M. Vessey, "The End of the Pagan Classics?," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 25 (2012), 939–947.

CHAPTER 3

Militia philosophorum : Le rôle des lettrés dans l'entourage des empereurs romains du IVe siècle

Bertrand Lançon

1 Introduction

Je souhaiterais partir de deux sources qui sont à peu près contemporaines et d'une troisième un peu plus tardive. La première est l'édit du 12 mars 370 (*CTh* 14.9.1), adressé au préfet de la Ville Olybrius par Valentinien Ier, Valens et Gratien, qui réglemente de manière stricte la vie étudiante à Rome. Dans ses dernières lignes, les empereurs enjoignent le Préfet de leur signaler, dans un rapport annuel, l'identité des meilleurs étudiants de la Ville, afin qu'ils soient recrutés au service de l'Etat, pour lequel ils sont jugés nécessaires[1]. Le deuxième document est le passage de l'*Expositio totius mundi* qui est consacré à la ville d'Alexandrie : le géographe anonyme qui en est l'auteur indique de manière explicite que c'est la production de papyrus de cette ville qui rend possible l'existence même de l'Empire des Romains[2] : cela signifie que l'écriture en est la condition *sine qua non*. Le troisième document le confirme : ce sont les illustrations de la *Notitia dignitatum*, datant des environs de 425, qui désignent les insignes du *primicerius notariorum*. On peut y voir des *volumina*, des *rotuli* et le grand *codex* du *Laterculus maius* des fonctionnaires de l'Etat[3].

Ces trois documents, me semble-il, résument la situation de l'Empire du IVe siècle : un pouvoir impérial qui s'exerce par l'écrit, par le truchement de bureaux dont les responsables sont recrutés parmi les meilleurs étudiants. En

1 *CTh* 14.9.1, *in fine : Similes autem breues etiam ad scrinia mansuetudinis nostrae annis singulis dirigantur, quo meritis singulorum institutionibusque compertis utrum quandoque nobis sint necessarii, iudicemus*.

2 *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* 36, ed. and trans. J. Rougé (Paris, 1966) : *Possidet cum omnibus quibus habet bonis et unam rem, quae nusquam nisi in Alexandria et in eius regione fit,* [*sine*] *cuius neque iudicia neque priuata negotia regi possunt, sed paene per ipsam rem omnis hominum natura stare uidetur. Et quid est quod sic a nobis laudatur ? Chartas quas ipsa faciens et omni mundo emittens utilem speciem omnibus ostendit* (pp. 172-173). Ce passage entre en résonance avec une affirmation de Pline l'Ancien, *Historia Naturalis* 13.68, ed. A. Ernout (Paris, 1956), p. 93 : *cum chartae usu, maxime humanitas uitae constet, certe memoria*.

3 *Notitia dignitatum*, ed. O. Seeck (1876 ; repr. Frankfurt, 1983], pp. 42 et 160.

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somme un Empire dont le fonctionnement, tant idéologique qu'administratif, est assuré par des lettrés, experts en lexique et calligraphie comme en grammaire et rhétorique. Comme si le meilleur usage de la langue et la maîtrise de l'écriture étaient la garantie la plus sûre du meilleur gouvernement possible.

2 La culture des empereurs

Dans la lignée des empereurs illyriens de la tétrarchie, les empereurs du IVe siècle, sauf rares exceptions, sont des militaires de carrière de culture modeste. On en trouve le parangon dans le portrait de Licinius brossé par le pseudo-Aurelius Victor : « il détestait la culture que, dans son ignorance sans bornes, il traitait de poison et de fléau public, surtout la pratique judiciaire »[4]. Cette description est topique du tyran. Elle était aussi celle d'Aurelius Victor, qui voit en lui le crucificateur des nobles philosophes, traités comme des esclaves[5]. Cependant, renversant le *topos*, une autre source nous invite à la prudence en nous présentant Licinius citant des vers de l'*Iliade*[6]. Quant à Constantin, s'il est considéré comme *litteris minus instructus* par l'anonyme de Valois[7], Eutrope indique qu'il se consacra aux arts et aux études libérales[8]. Le pseudo-Aurelius Victor le confirme : « il favorisa la culture, surtout l'étude des lettres ; lui-même lisait, écrivait, réfléchissait, écoutait les députations et les plaintes des provinces »[9]. On sait qu'il maîtrisait assez le grec pour arbitrer les débats entre évêques hellénophones lors du concile de Nicée, en 325 et qu'il y avait invité des philosophes et des dialecticiens[10]. Il est vrai que sa mère était sans doute hellénophone et qu'il avait longuement séjourné à Nicomédie, auprès de Dioclétien

4 Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epitome de Caesaribus* 41.8 : *infestus litteris quas per inscitiam immodicam uirus ac pestem publicam nominabat, praecipue forensem industriam, Abrégé des Césars*, ed. et trad. M. Festy (Paris, 1999), p. 44.

5 Aurelius Victor, *Historiae abreuiatae de Caesaribus* 41.5 : *Licinio ne insontium quidem ac nobilium philosophorum seruili more cruciatus adhibiti modum fecere*.

6 *Anonymus post Dionem*, fr. 14.2 (*FHG*, IV, p.199), cf. M. Festy, *Abrégé des Césars*, p. 199, n. 15.

7 *Excerpta valesiana* 2.2, ed. J. Moreau (Leipzig, 1968). Cependant, le pseudo-Aurelius Victor précise qu'il tenait à lire et à écrire lui-même (41).

8 Eutrope, *Breuiarium* 10.7.2 : *ciuilibus artibus et studiis liberalibus deditus*.

9 Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epitome de Caesaribus* 41.14 : *nutrire artes bonas, praecipue studia litterarum, legere ipse, scribere, meditari, audire legationes et querimonias prouinciarum*.

10 Sozomène, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 1.20.1. Cette invitation, qui avait sans doute pour but d'éclairer les débats sur des questions délicates de vocabulaire et de logique, est pour Rufin, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 10.3, un moyen pour l'empereur de mettre en scène leur défaite face aux évêques.

puis de Galère[11]. Son fils Constance est, quant à lui, crédité par Aurelius Victor d'un grand talent d'éloquence[12]. Selon Ammien Marcellin, Valens était de peu de culture et d'intelligence (*subagrestis*)[13]. Quant à Théodose, l'auteur du *De uita et moribus imperatorum* le dit *mediocriter doctus* et précise qu'il se méfiait de l'érudition excessive, à laquelle il préférait les dispositions naturelles de l'intelligence[14]. On peut donc dire que Constance II, qui possédait le talent de l'éloquence qu'Aurelius Victor juge supérieur dans la paix comme dans la guerre[15], Julien, formé aux arts libéraux avant son accession au Césarat, Eugène, ancien grammairien, ou le sénateur Attale auteur de pièces lyriques, apparaissent comme de fugaces exceptions, de même que Jovien, qualifié de *literarum instructus*[16].

Quant à la relation des empereurs avec la culture, un passage d'Eutrope mérite d'être mentionné, qui évoque Vétranion, l'éphémère usurpateur d'Illyricum en 350. Il y précise que celui-ci, tout en étant courtois et fidèle à la tradition, était « si étranger à tous les arts libéraux qu'il ne reçut les tout premiers rudiments des lettres que dans son grand âge, alors qu'il était déjà empereur »[17]. Il avait fait une carrière militaire qui l'avait conduit jusqu'à la dignité de *magister peditum* de Pannonie. Son ignorance dans les arts libéraux ne signifie pas qu'il était analphabète ou totalement inculte, mais simplement qu'il n'était aucunement frotté de la *paideia* des grammairiens et des rhéteurs. Qu'il en reçût alors les premiers rudiments indique clairement que la *purpura* ne pouvait être revêtue sans avoir une teinture du langage et de la culture des *literati*, habituels interlocuteurs des empereurs. Un Auguste se devait donc

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11 Entre 293 et 305, soit une douzaine d'années.

12 Aurelius Victor, *Historiae abreuiatae de Caesaribus* 42.4, s'appuie sur cet exemple pour louer la supériorité de l'art oratoire dans la guerre comme dans la paix.

13 Ammien Marcellin 31.14 : *subagrestis ingenii, nec bellicis, nec liberalibus studiis eruditus*.

14 Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epitome de Caesaribus* 48.9 : *erudita mirari, sed innoxia*.

15 Aurelius Victor, *Historiae abreuiatae de Caesaribus* 42.4.

16 Voir le portrait intellectuel de Julien par Ammien Marcellin 16.5.4-8. Pour Jovien : Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epitome de Caesaribus* 44.3 : les *literae* dans lesquelles il était instruit sont peut-être les saintes Écritures. Sur Eugène : *PLRE* 1, Fl. Eugenius 6, p. 293, se référant à Socrate, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.25.1, pour l'enseignement de la grammaire latine et son poste d'*antigrapheus tou basileôs*, à Zosime, *Historia nova* 4.54.1 et Jean d'Antioche, fr. 187 pour la rhétorique. Sur Attale : *PLRE* 2, Priscus Attalus 2, pp. 180-181 : son intérêt pour les lettres est mentionné par Symmaque, *Lettres* 7.18. On sait par Olympiodore, fr.24, qu'il composa l'épithalame pour le mariage d'Athaulf et de Galla Placidia à Narbonne en janvier 414 et le chanta en s'accompagnant de la lyre, ce que Le Nain de Tillemont, *Histoire des empereurs*, (1701, repr. Paris, 1732), t.V, LII, p. 269, juge « indigne d'un empereur ».

17 Eutrope, *Breviarium* 10.10.2, ed. and trans. J. Hellegouarc'h (Paris, 1999) : *sed omnium liberalium artium expertem adeo ut ne elementa quidem prima litterarum nisi grandaeuus et iam imperator acceperit*.

d'atteindre un niveau de culture, non seulement pour seoir à sa dignité, mais aussi pour comprendre les rhéteurs et leur parler. La tâche gouvernementale ne pouvait aller sans cette communication, d'où cet apprentissage tardif et précipité des lettres par ce vieux militaire. Eutrope semble dire ici l'impossibilité, pour empereur romain, d'être coupé de la *paideia*. Autrement dit, celle-ci avait une puissance légitimante.

Il est notoire que, pour instruire leurs fils, les empereurs du IVe siècle s'adressent aux meilleurs des rhéteurs. Nous en connaissons au moins trois exemples fameux. Celui de Constantin, qui fait appel à Lactance pour instruire son fils Crispus[18] ; celui de Valentinien Ier, qui fait de même avec Ausone pour Gratien. Et enfin, celui de Théodose, chargeant, en 388, le diacre romain Arsenius de l'éducation de son fils aîné Arcadius, alors que Thémistios lui-même avait brigué cette charge[19]. Cette tendance témoigne clairement d'un désir des princes du IVe siècle de confier l'éducation de leur fils aîné à la crème de la crème des rhéteurs de leur temps. Autrement dit de tremper leur successeur présomptif dans la meilleure *paideia* possible, celle qu'ils n'ont pas reçue eux-mêmes. Mais cette volonté se heurte à différents aléas, en particulier les morts précoces. Les trois princes que nous évoquons sont en effet morts avant l'âge de trente ans et n'ont pas eu le temps de déployer les bénéfices de leur éducation : Crispus fut exécuté à 26 ans en 326 ; Gratien, qui préférait les exercices de tir à l'arc avec les Alains de sa garde blanche, fut assassiné en 383 à l'âge de 21 ans. Quant à Arcadius, rétif à l'enseignement d'Arsenius, qu'il contraignit par de sourdes menaces à fuir dans le désert de Scété, il mourut en 408 à l'âge de 28 ans.

3 Culture indispensable, lettrés nécessaires

Dans deux de ses lettres, Libanios nous apprend que Rufin, Gaulois d'origine – *keltos to genos*, dit Zosime- et nommé par Théodose préfet du prétoire d'Orient, apprit précipitamment le grec au cours de l'année 393[20]. Preuve en est que le vieux bilinguisme des élites romaines avait commencé de se lézarder, alors même que leur mobilité dans les fonctions, tant occidentales qu'orientales était demeurée. Il est à noter, que, du fait de sa prise de poste à Constantinople, et parallèlement à son apprentissage rapide du grec, Rufin reçut du moine Évagre

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18 Jérôme, *De viris illustribus* 80.

19 Thémistios, *Oratio* 16.

20 Libanios, *Epist.* 865 et 1106 ; voir aussi *PLRE* 1, Flavius Rufinus, pp. 778-781. Rufin avait été *magister officiorum* de 388 à 392, date à laquelle il reçut le consulat ordinaire.

le baptême catholique[21]. On ne peut manquer de voir une double nécessité dans cette intronisation à la fois linguistique et doxologique.

Une autre qualité que la culture est perceptible chez les lettrés que sont les philosophes : la *parrhēsia* ou liberté de parole. Peter Brown rappelle le cas du philosophe Hermogénès, qui était secrétaire de Gallus, le frère de Julien. Dans son *Discours* 48, Himerios fait son éloge, car, selon lui, celui-ci savait adoucir par ses paroles la façon de gouverner du César[22]. De la sorte, il ne subit pas de disgrâce après l'exécution de Gallus et, après une brève retraite philosophique, retrouva ensuite un poste dans un bureau au temps de Julien. Sa *parrhēsia* en faisait, selon Peter Brown, le « secrétaire parfait dans le cadre du patronage »[23].

4 Les panégyristes

Le IVe siècle est, à n'en pas douter, l'âge d'or des panégyriques impériaux. Leur nombre me paraît significatif d'une importance croissante du discours d'éloge dans l'assise du pouvoir politique : dix-huit entre 289 et 395, dont quatorze pour le IVe siècle proprement dit, auxquels s'ajoutent des *gratiarum actiones*, telles celles d'Ausone (379) et de Symmaque (388, 391).

Ce gonflement de l'éloge dans l'entourage impérial marque d'une part la généralisation de la rhétorique encomiastique, et d'autre part témoigne, à partir de Constantin, d'un fait nouveau : l'engagement des évêques dans cette rhétorique. Le premier fut Eusèbe de Césarée, qui, selon Sozomène, fit l'éloge de Constantin dans un discours prononcé au début du concile de Nicée, et qui fit ensuite de même, onze ans plus tard, pour les *Tricennalia* de l'empereur (336)[24]. On sait par Paulin de Nole lui-même qu'Endelechius l'aurait incité à rédiger un panégyrique de Théodose, et que celui-ci ne fut adressé qu'à un nombre limité d'amis[25]. Les circonstances sont aussi funèbres : c'est le cas sous Théodose, de Grégoire de Nysse rédigeant l'éloge de la défunte Augusta Aelia

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21 Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 11, ed. C. Butler (Cambridge, 1898).

22 Himerios, *Oratio* 48.19 et *Oratio* 30, ed. A. Colonna (Roma, 1951).

23 P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity* (Madison, 1992), p. 67.

24 Sozomène, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 1.19.2 ; Eusèbe de Césarée, *Discours des Tricennales*, in P. Maraval, *Eusèbe de Césarée : La théologie politique de l'Empire chrétien. Louanges de Constantin* (Paris, 2001).

25 Paulin de Nole, *Epist.* 9 ; ce texte n'est pas conservé. Le Nain de Tillemont, *Histoire des empereurs*, vol. 5 (Paris, 1701), pp. 148 et 402.

Flaccilla en 386, et bien sûr d'Ambroise, prononçant son *De obitu Theodosii* quarante jours après le décès du prince à Milan, à la fin février 395[26].

Leur contenu ressortit à un genre laudatif stéréotypé : le prince est beau, sobre, maître de lui-même, victorieux et divin. Si les textes ne le dépeignent pas tel qu'il est, il le décrivent en tout cas comme il doit être. Ils sont donc tantôt un remerciement, tantôt un appel à ressembler au modèle exalté comme idéal. Cet *Idealtype* n'est pas forcément une figure abstraite, puisque dans son éloge funèbre, Ambroise érige Théodose en nouveau Constantin, gommant ainsi les présomptions d'arianisme qui avaient subsisté sur cet empereur[27].

5 Méfiance mutuelle

Etre grammairien, rhéteur ou précepteur n'était toutefois pas sans danger. L'auteur de l' *Histoire Auguste* nous apprend ainsi qu'Aurélien fit exécuter Longin, qui enseignait le grec à la reine de Palmyre, Zénobie, après sa victoire sur celle-ci. Il l'avait en effet jugé coupable d'avoir inspiré à la reine une lettre insolente. Le grammairien servit donc de bouc émissaire, car il n'avait fait que mettre son éloquence dans la langue grecque à la disposition de Zénobie pour traduire ce qu'elle lui avait dicté. Il précise par ailleurs que cette exécution fut regrettée par l'opinion publique, qui l'aurait jugée injuste[28]. Nous trouvons un autre exemple en 354, à Antioche : au moment de mourir assassiné, le questeur Montius ayant adressé des reproches à Épigone et Eusèbe, sans dire qui ils étaient, le César Gallus fit amener de Cilicie le sophiste Épigone et d'Émèse le rhéteur Eusèbe, surnommé Pittacas[29]. Ce n'était pas eux, précise Ammien, que Montius avait désignés, mais deux *tribuni fabricarum* qui lui avaient promis des armes. Cette confusion est très instructive. Elle nous indique en effet que, dans une affaire de complot politique, le soupçon était d'emblée porté sur des sophistes et des rhéteurs connus, car ils étaient supposés alimenter la rébellion par leur discours. De fait, Ammien précise qu'Eusèbe « Pittacas » était un orateur véhément (*concitatus orator*) : l'exercice abrupt de la *parrhēsia* pouvait donc, on le voit, surtout si elle était dirigée contre une pratique tyrannique du

26 Grégoire de Nysse, *Oratio funebris in Flaccillam Imperatricem*, ed. A. Spira (Leiden, 1967) ; Ambroise, *De obitu Theodosii*, ed. O. Faller (Wien, 1955).

27 Ainsi dans le *Chronicon* de Jérôme, datant de 380, où celui-ci l'accusait d'avoir sombré (*declinat*) dans la doctrine des ariens et ainsi provoqué une discorde universelle (*totius orbis discordia*), Jérôme, *Chronicon* 337a, trad. B. Jeanjean et B. Lançon (Rennes, 2004), pp. 80-81.

28 Scriptores Historiae Augustae, *Vita Aureliani* 30.2.

29 Ammien Marcellin 14.6.18.

pouvoir, susciter la méfiance impériale ; *a fortiori* celle d'un Gallus qu'Ammien décrit comme un paranoïaque violent. C'est aussi pourquoi l'on peut voir dans les *Vies de sophistes* rédigées par Eunape une apologie des hommes qui étaient les seuls représentants de la *paideia* à pouvoir exercer, par la parole et l'écrit, un contre-pouvoir salutaire.

A l'inverse, on voit Gratien conférer le consulat de 379 à son ancien précepteur Ausone, avec l'affection digne de celle d'un petit-fils. Et celui-ci l'en remercie dans une *Gratiarum actio* affectueuse, nourrie d' une culture républicaine à la fois vibrante et conventionnelle[30].

6 Compétences et récompenses

Dans sa *Chronique*, Jérôme rappelle qu'en 329, Constantin rappela d'exil Porfyrius qui lui avait adressé un livre de *Carmina* en son honneur. Ce ne fut pas, en réalité, après la fin de l'année 326. P. Optatianus Porfyrius fut sans doute disgracié entre 323 et 326, date à laquelle Constantin le rappela pour lui confier le proconsulat d'Achaïe. Il fut ensuite préfet *bis* de la Ville de Rome, en 329 et en 333[31]. Ce qui nous intéresse ici est que, selon Jérôme, Porfyrius aurait été rappelé d'exil par l'empereur après qu'il eut reçu de lui un livre remarquable (*misso ad Constantinum insigni uolumine*)[32]. De fait, ce livre, qui est conservé, est un recueil de *Carmina*, à mi-chemin entre l'acrostiche et le calligramme. Ces poèmes exaltent le pouvoir constantinien et sont autant d'aphorismes encomiastiques versifiés[33]. On ne peut que relier leur dédicace au retour en grâces de l'auteur, à qui Constantin confia d'éminents postes de rang clarissime. Il s'agit donc d'un échange de bons procédés. D'un côté, c'est un exercice littéraire virtuose dans l'éloge qui permet à Porfyrius de revenir au premier plan ; de l'autre c'est la reconnaissance par Constantin de cet éloge qui l'incite à mettre fin à un exil et à confier à son auteur des fonctions prestigieuses.

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30 Ausone*, Gratiarum actio*, ed. C. Schlenk (Berlin, 1883), 31B. 49.

31 A. Chastagnol, Les *Fastes de la préfecture de Rome au Bas-Empire* (Paris, 1962), pp. 80-81 ; T.D. Barnes, « Publius Optatianus Porfyrius, » *American Journal of Philology* 96 (1975), 173-186 [repr. in *Early Christianity and the Roman Empire* (London and Aldershot, 1984)] ; J.S. Edwards, « The *Carmina* of P. Optatianus Porphyrius and the Creative Process, » in C. Deroux, ed., *Studies in Latin literature and Roman History* 12 (Bruxelles, 2005), pp. 447-466.

32 Jérôme, *Chronicon* 329e, trad. B. Jeanjean et B. Lançon (Rennes, 2004), pp. 78-79.

33 Porfyrius, *Carmina, PL* 19 : 387-432. Voir J. Wienand, « The Making of an Imperial Dynasty : Optatian's *Carmina figurata* and the Development of the Constantinian Domus divina, » *Giornale Italiano di Filologia* 3 (2012), 225-265.

Un autre exemple nous est fourni par Prohairesios, le rhéteur d'origine arménienne. Eunape le décrit prononçant un *prooimion* devant le proconsul d'Achaïe : non seulement il y met l'accent sur l'injustice d'un pouvoir trop rapidement exercé, mais provoque ainsi les applaudissements du proconsul[34] ! Nous avons là une parfaite illustration du double pouvoir des rhéteurs de talent : la liberté de critiquer et la faculté, par l'éloquence, de soulever un enthousiasme admiratif. On pourrait même dire que cette danse avec les mots, pour reprendre l'expression d'Eunape, est attendue et désirée par les auditeurs, tout comme de brillantes improvisations musicales dans les sociétés orientales. Prohairesios était si réputé que l'empereur Constant le fit venir auprès de lui en Gaule, où il l'admit à sa table, et d'où il l'envoya séjourner à Rome. C'était pour le faire connaître, certes, mais aussi par fierté. Lorsqu'il repartit à Athènes, il demanda et obtint en cadeau de Constant un groupe d'îles de l'Égée qu'il voulait soustraire au tribut athénien, et reçut pour cela la dignité de stratopédarque[35].

On ajoutera que la fréquence des dédicaces de livres aux empereurs peut aussi être évaluée comme un témoignage de l'ambitions des lettrés, qui espèrent ainsi se voir confier de hautes dignités ou en tirer des avantages[36].

Prenons maintenant quelques exemples parmi les consuls ordinaires de l'époque théodosienne. En 381, ils sont tous deux des lettrés. Antonius composait des tragédies au dire de Symmaque[37]. Son collègue Syagrius des poèmes selon Sidoine Apollinaire[38]. Six ans plus tard, en 387, le collègue de Valentinien II au consulat est Eutrope. Ce personnage, qui est attesté comme *magister memoriae* en 369, puis proconsul d'Asie en 371-372 et préfet du prétoire d'Illyricum en 380-381, est l'auteur d'un célèbre *Breuiarium* de l'Histoire romaine, d'Auguste à Jovien[39]. Citons encore quelques exemples. Mallus Theodorus, trois fois préfet du prétoire, d'Illyricum, puis d'Afrique et d'Italie, et consul en 399. Expert en versification, il est réputé être l'auteur d'un traité *De metris*. Sa notoriété de lettré lui vaut aussi bien un éloge de Claudien en 340 vers, que la dédicace, par

34 Eunape de Sardes, *Vitae philosophorum et sophistarum* 4, trad. O. D'Jeranian (Houilles, 2009), p. 106.

35 Id., *ibid.*, pp. 122-124. Rappelons que Julien, qui avait été son élève, avait voulu dispenser Prohaereios de sa mesure écartant les chrétiens de l'enseignement, ce que le rhéteur avait refusé.

36 Citons comme exemples parmi d'autres, trois ouvrages composés dans la seconde moitié du IVe siècle : le *Breuiarium* d'Eutrope, le *De rebus bellicis* (anonyme), l'abrégé *De Caesaribus* d'Aurelius Victor.

37 Symmaque, *Epist.* 1.89, ed. J-P. Callu (Paris, 1972).

38 Sidoine Apollinaire, *Epist.* 5.5.1.

39 *PLRE* 1, Eutropius 2, p. 317.

Augustin, de son *De beata uita*[40]. Anicius Auchenius Bassus, consul de 408, écrivit quant à lui des vers qui furent gravés en épitaphe sur le tombeau de Monique, la mère d'Augustin, décédée en 387[41].

Les années 390 et 391 nous offrent deux exemples différents et particulièrement instructifs. En 390, alors qu'il réside en Occident, Théodose choisit comme collègue de Valentinien II un ancien notaire de Valentinien Ier, Flavius Neoterius. Il est permis d'imaginer que ce sont ses compétences, son expérience et sa fidélité dans la *militia* qui lui valurent la confiance de Théodose, qui lui avait confié successivement trois préfectures du prétoire : celle d'Orient en 380-381, puis celle d'Italie en 385, et celle des Gaules en 390[42]. On connaît l'importance prise par les notaires dans l'entourage impérial à partir de Constance II. Leur influence croissante n'eut pas toujours les effets les plus heureux au dire d'Ammien Marcellin, qui leur prête un rôle intrigant et répressif, auquel Julien mit un coup d'arrêt lors de la tenue de la commission de Chalcédoine.

Nous pourrions rapprocher de Neoterius le cas d'Eugène, l'usurpateur occidental de 392-394. Il avait enseigné la grammaire et la rhétorique latine avant d'être recruté comme *magister* dans l'un des *scrinia* du Palais. Sa carrière nous montre bien le lien entre la compétence dans le maniement de la langue et l'exercice de hautes fonctions administratives. C'est d'ailleurs au Palais sacré, dans l'exercice de ses fonctions, qu'il se fit remarquer par Arbogast, qui lui remit la pourpre en 392 après l'assassinat de Valentinien II[43]. Ainsi voyons nous se succéder au consulat des hommes de lettres aux compétences rhétoriques affirmées : il n'est qu'à regarder la carrière des anciens élèves de Libanios, tel Aristaenetus, préfet de la ville de Constantinople en 392, et consul en 404[44].

L'année 391 voit parvenir au consulat, un homme d'un tout autre profil que Neoterius : Symmaque. Sénateur de rang illustre, il avait pris parti pour Maxime, mais rédigea un panégyrique de Théodose en 388 afin de rentrer dans les grâces du vainqueur. Ce qu'il obtint puisqu'il fut choisi pour le consulat de 391. Il redoubla alors de flatterie, toujours à Milan, en prononçant une *Gratiarum actio* le 1er janvier de cette année-là, jour de son entrée en charge. On pourrait y voir de la flagornerie, si ce n'est que Théodose ne disgracia pas Symmaque comme il eut pu le faire. On peut y voir le signe que, pour les

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40 *PLRE* 1, Flavius Mallus Theodorus 27, pp. 900-902.

41 *Anthologia Latina* 1.670 ; *PLRE* 2, Bassus 7, p. 220.

42 *PLRE* 1, Flavius Neoterius, p. 623.

43 *PLRE*, I, Flavius Eugenius 6, p. 293.

44 *PLRE*, I, Aristaenetus 2, p. 104 ; P. Petit, *Les étudiants de Libanios* (Paris, 1957), p. 173 : 43,3% de 30 condisciples connus de Libanios ont eu une carrière de fonctionnaire de l'Empire ; voir R. Cribiore, *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch* (Princeton, 2007).

empereurs, le soutien des rhéteurs les plus en vue était un élément primordial de *Realpolitik*. Autrement dit, quel que fût leur sens de l'autorité, les princes étaient dans l'incapacité de tenir pour négligeables de bonnes relations avec les meilleurs manieurs de langage de l'Empire. Cela nous amène à penser le discours, écrit et oral, comme un des piliers majeurs du Palais sacré[45].

L'équilibre des relations entre les princes et les rhéteurs suppose des qualités dans chacune des parties. Nous les trouvons mentionnées par Symmaque dans ses discours panégyriques et ses rapports de préfet de la Ville, dans des phrases qui sont autant de rappels de ce que chacun doit. L'empereur, selon lui, doit avoir conscience que « tous les pouvoirs comportent des devoirs définis »[46]. Il est bon que les Augustes, tel Valentinien Ier, connaissent « dans leur ensemble les parties de [leur] Empire », prennent « des exemples dans le monde entier », et échappent à la colère en s'adonnant à la raison[47]. Il loue Gratien de se préoccuper à la fois des trophées militaires et des belles-lettres, et de manipuler sous la même tente les armes et les livres[48]. Il rappelle à l'occasion qu'Alexandre le Grand fit campagne dans le monde entier escorté d'une *militia philosophorum*. Autrement dit, le rappel des devoirs impériaux incombe aux philosophes et rhéteurs, que les empereurs se doivent d'écouter, tout en lisant les Anciens, dans lesquels on peut trouver des avis et des sentences qui aident à gouverner la république avec justesse. Pour cela, les empereurs, tels Gratien doivent avoir été pleinement modelés dans les antiques vertus (*ueterum signa uirtutum*).

De leur côté, les lettrés doivent être imprégnés, *dies noctisque*, d'*obsequiuum* (obéissance), de *deuotio* et de *mores* (dévouement et sens de la tradition), ainsi que du souci de promouvoir les commandements de Sa Clémence[49]. C'est cette conjonction qui permet à l'Etat, selon Symmaque, de s'enrichir en substance[50].

45 Sur ce point, je renvoie à Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, qui consacre les pages pénétrantes de son chapitre 2 à la relation entre la *paideia* et le pouvoir.

46 Symmaque, *Relatio* 48 (a.384/385), ed. J.-P. Callu (Paris, 2009) : *Certa officia sunt omnium postestatum*.

47 *Ibid.*, 1, 2 et 3 : *uniuersa cernenti, qui cunctas partes nouit imperii ; totius mundi exempla sumpsisti ; ubi consilium est tu solus eligeris*.

48 Symmaque, *Oratio* 3 *ad Gratianum* 7, ed. J.-P. Callu (Paris, 2009) : *tropaeis et litteris occupatus ; . . . cum in isdem tentoriis tuis, uolumina et arma tractantur*.

49 Symmaque, *Relationes* 36 et 45.

50 Symmaque, *Oratio* 2 *ad Valentinianum* 24 : *Elementis quodammodo ditatam cerno rem publicam*.

7 Le cas des auteurs médicaux

Parmi les hommes instruits à qui les empereurs romains du IVe siècle confièrent de hautes fonctions, se trouvent aussi des personnages versés dans l'art médical. Je ne dis pas « médecins » dans la mesure où les rédacteurs de traités de médecine ne pratiquaient pas forcément la médecine. En revanche, tous les *medici* et *iatroi*, sans avoir forcément une culture aussi complète que celle de Galien[51], étaient imprégnés des arts libéraux, la médecine étant considérée comme « sœur de la philosophie »[52]. La lecture des notices consacrées par Eunape de Sardes aux iatrosophistes est particulièrement éloquente sur ce point[53]. Il nous présente Oribase comme un modèle incomparable de la conversation philosophique. Jusqu'au XIXe siècle, on ne saurait en effet départir les textes médicaux ou « scientifiques » de la textualité littéraire sans commettre un anachronisme rétrojectif[54]. Au IVe siècle, nous sommes bel et bien dans la tradition galénique, celle qui énonce « que l'excellent médecin est aussi philosophe » ; Galien conclut en effet ce petit traité en affirmant qu' « il nous faut d'abord être philosophes, si nous sommes véritablement les zélateurs d'Hippocrate »[55].

Sans prétendre à l'exhaustivité, j'ai relevé cinq exemples significatifs. Ainsi Dorus, ancien médecin des *Scutarii*, fut nommé par Magnence, en 351, *nitentium rerum centurio*, donc responsable de la surveillance et de la protection des œuvres d'art de la Ville de Rome[56] ; c'est dans cette fonction qu'il accusa le préfet urbain Adelphius du crime de *maiestas*. Beaucoup plus célèbre est Oribase, auteur du plus gros traité médical du IVe siècle, les *Synagôgai iatroikai*

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51 Sur la formation de Galien, voulue et assurée par son père Nikon, voir P. Moraux, *Galien de Pergame : Souvenirs d'un médecin* (Paris, 1985), pp. 41-46.

52 Tertullien, *De anima* 2.4, eds. J.H. Waszink, E.P. Meijering, J. de Boeft and J.C.M. van Winden (Leiden, 2010) : *Soror, ut aiunt, philosophiae*.

53 Eunape, *Vitae philosophorum et sophistarum* 4 ; Oribase, trad. O. D'Jeranian (Houilles, 2009).

54 Voir A. Gargam, *Les femmes lettrées, savantes et cultivées dans la littérature française des Lumières* (Paris, 2013), Introduction. L'auteur y montre, pour le XVIIIe siècle, l'intégration des auteurs médicaux à la même *res publica* que les producteurs de textes littéraires. La scission avec les Lettres ne se fit que progressivement, au cours du XIXe siècle.

55 Galien, *Quod optimus medicus sit quoque philosophus*, ed. et trad. V. Boudon-Millot (Paris, 2007), vol. 1, pp. 235-314 ; 4.4 : φιλοσοφητέον ἡμῖν ἐστι πρότερον, εἴπερ Ἱπποκράτους ἀληθῶς ἐσμεν ζηλῶται.

56 Ammien Marcellin 16.6.2 ; Chastagnol, Les *Fastes*.

(« Collection médicale »)[57]. Il fut archiatre de Julien en Gaule et un des artisans de son élévation à l'Augustat en 360. A Constantinople, il se vit confier le poste de *quaestor Vrbis*, et fut chargé d'une mission à Delphes[58]. Le même Julien insista auprès de Césaire de Nazianze, le frère de Grégoire, qui était médecin, pour qu'il demeurât en poste à Constantinople, alors qu'il était chrétien ; toutefois, celui-ci refusa et fut envoyé en Bithynie dans une autre fonction, peut-être celle de *comes thesaurorum*[59]. C'est une preuve parmi d'autres que Julien n'éloigna pas les lettrés chrétiens de son entourage et des fonctions palatines.

Le père d'Ausone, Iulius Ausonius était quant à lui médecin dans la région bordelaise : fort âgé, il reçut de Gratien la dignité de préfet du prétoire d'Illyricum vers 378[60]. Notons que deux auteurs médicaux d'origine gauloise, Eutropius et Siburius, reçurent à la même époque (379-380) une préfecture du prétoire[61]. C'est un signe de l'influence qu'avait alors Ausone, qui soutint auprès de Gratien la promotion de son entourage gaulois[62]. On peut douter que le nonagénaire Ausonius senior se soit déplacé jusqu'à Sirmium pour occuper sa fonction. Cela signifie donc que la dignité pouvait être davantage un honneur qu'une fonction réelle et un honneur destiné à des lettrés pour le fait d'appartenir à un cercle influent de soutien.

Un autre exemple nous est fourni par Vindicianus, un médecin prestigieux qui avait été *comes archiatrorum* de Valentinien Ier. Gratien le nomma proconsul d'Afrique en 379, poste très élevé et envié dans lequel il demeura trois ans. Il fut aussi consulaire de Campanie et *Vicarius Urbis Romae*[63]. Enfin, citons l'Aquitain Marcellus, un admirateur de Vindicianus, auteur du *De medicamen-*

57 Oribase, *Collectio medica*, ed. I. Raeder (Amsterdam, 1964), 4 vols. Son ouvrage comportait 70 livres, dont 23 nous sont parvenus ; il en fit un *Synopsis* (abrégé) en 9 livres, ainsi qu'un guide pratique en 4 livres, les *Euporista*.

58 B. Baldwin, "The career of Oribasius," *Acta classica* 8 (1975), 85-97. Je remercie Gavin Kelly de m'avoir rappelé que sa charge de questeur n'était pas celle de *quaestor sacri palatii*.

59 Sur Césaire de Cappadoce, voir R. Goulet, ed., *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1994), p. 281 (85).

60 *RE*, Ausonius 2 ; *PLRE* 1, Decimus Magnus Ausonius 7, pp. 140-141.

61 Ils sont mentionnés par Marcellus dans la préface de son *De medicamentis liber*, eds. Liechtenhan, Kollesch and Nickel (Berlin, 1968), 2 vols.

62 Sur ce point, voir l'article de J. Matthews, "Gallic supporters of Theodosius," *Latomus* 30 (1971), 1073-1099 at pp. 1090-1091.

63 *RE* 9 A1, Vindicianus 2, col. 29-36 (K. Deichgräber) ; *PLRE* 1, Vindicianus 2, p. 967. On sait qu'il fut en relation avec Augustin, le dissuadant d'apporter le moindre crédit aux horoscopes (*Confessions*, 4.3.5).

tis liber après 401, qui occupa en 394-395 les fonctions de *magister officiorum* et de *magister sacri palatii* de Théodose[64].

On notera donc que les médecins et les auteurs médicaux jouissaient de la part des empereurs de la même considération que les rhéteurs. *A fortiori*, les princes pouvaient s'appuyer autant sur leur sens du bien public – dont témoignait le serment d'Hippocrate – que sur leurs compétences dans les arts libéraux. Les indications que donne Galien sur sa propre formation, voulue par son père Nikon, nous montrent en effet qu'un médecin pouvait, à la condition d'avoir eu de bons maîtres, posséder le même bagage intellectuel qu'un rhéteur[65].

8 Le cas des évêques

Avec Constantin, une autre catégorie de lettrés apparaît dans l'entourage impérial, celle des évêques chrétiens. On sait qu'Hosius de Cordoue fut pour lui un homme de confiance et qu'Eusèbe de Césarée en fut un autre, qui rédigea ses louanges à plusieurs occasions. Constance II confia Julien enfant à Eusèbe de Nicomédie. En 363, arrivant au pouvoir, Jovien demanda conseil à Athanase, qui lui répondit et se déplaça pour le rencontrer[66]. Dans les années qui suivirent, Valens s'attira les foudres d' Hosius de Cordoue, d'Hilaire de Poitiers, de Lucifer de Cagliari et du même Athanase du fait de sa politique favorable aux évêques ariens et coercitive à l'égard des nicéens. A l'époque de Théodose, le cas d'Ambroise réunit les caractéristiques des entourages civil et ecclésiastique[67]. Il était le fils d'un homme de rang préfectoral et avait reçu les compétences rhétoriques qui lui permirent de devenir correcteur de Ligurie avant son accession au siège épiscopal de Milan[68]. Dans sa position d'évêque, il adressa quatorze lettres d'admonition à quatre empereurs, ce qui est une forme évidente de *parrhēsia* insistante dans le conseil. A ce titre, il entend comme Thémistios influer sur les décisions de Théodose. Dans leur volonté d'être entendus et écoutés des empereurs, les évêques du IVe siècle n'ajoutent à la parole des rhéteurs la dimension de la *doxa* théologique ; celle de l'appel

64 PLRE 1, Marcellus 7, pp. 551-552.

65 Voir à ce sujet P. Moraux, *Galien de Pergame*, part. pp. 41-49.

66 Rufin, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 11.1.

67 Voir N. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan : Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley, 1994), part. ch. 7 : Ambrose and Theodosius (pp. 291-360).

68 PLRE 1, Ambrosius 3, p. 52.

à l'humilité ne fut que renforcée par des références bibliques. En tout état de cause, Ambroise culmine dans le désir épiscopal de former, près de l'empereur, une sorte de *senatus episcoporum*, tel qu'il s'était assemblé autour de lui lors des conciles de Nicée en 325 et de Constantinople en 381. Or les membres les plus influents de ce sénat informel sont des lettrés.

9 Des lettrés intouchables

Nous avons avec Libanios, Thémistios et Ambroise, trois exemples de lettrés qui ont atteint un degré de compétence et de notoriété qui les ont rendus intouchables en usant d'une *parrhēsia* puissante à l'égard des empereurs.

Libanios ne faisait pas partie de l'entourage impérial *stricto sensu*, mais il demeura, durant sa longue carrière, un interlocuteur continuel des princes. Son collègue et contemporain Thémistios, parce que résidant à Constantinople, fut quant à lui plus proche de Constance II, de Valens et de Théodose. Libanios intercède et fait appel aux qualités impériales. Thémistios les encourage : il adresse ainsi cinq discours à Théodose. Ambroise, lui, avait des oreilles jusqu'au consistoire, ce qui indisposa Théodose. Au point que ce dernier réunit le consistoire hors les murs afin que le contenu de la séance ne fût pas divulgué aux oreilles d'Ambroise lors de l'affaire de Thessalonique. Tandis que Thémistios exhorte l'empereur à la tolérance, Ambroise l'appelle à l'humilité.

On sait qu'Ambroise tança respectueusement mais fermement Théodose, après le massacre de Thessalonique, pour avoir failli aux règles, tant celles de la *paideia*, du fait de sa colère, que celles de la *res publica*, du fait d'une répression accomplie sans enquêtes ni procès. Le grand changement qui se produit avec Ambroise vient de sa décision d'écarter l'empereur de l'Église tant qu'il n'aurait pas reconnu publiquement ces deux erreurs. Par cette procédure d'exclusion temporaire inédite, il mit en relief la vulnérabilité toute nouvelle d'un empereur baptisé et croyant nicéen[69]. Il sut le convaincre de réintégrer les deux mondes dont il était sorti. Il est permis de penser que Théodose eut la subtilité de comprendre que sa pénitence ne l'amoindrirait pas mais le grandirait. Et Ambroise celle de faire son éloge pour cela : non pas celui d'un prince parfait mais d'un prince perfectible, car humble et accessible aux admonestations.

69 Rappelons que Théodose avait été baptisé à Thessalonique par l'évêque nicéen de la ville, Ascholios, en 380, alors qu'il était gravement malade (Sozomène, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7.4.3).

10 De la dépendance mutuelle à « la maladie des bouches cousues »

Il est patent qu'hormis Julien, à un moindre degré Jovien, et Eugène, les empereurs du IVe siècle furent principalement des hommes de formation militaire, n'ayant pas fréquenté les leçons des grammairiens et des rhéteurs de leur temps.

Dans un Empire dont l'administration était fondée sur l'échange écrit, la *militia* de l'État requérait, pour ses bureaux et ses gouvernements provinciaux, des hommes formés dans les arts libéraux. Aussi les empereurs requéraient-ils à leur service les lettrés les plus en vue de leur époque, tant pour éduquer leurs enfants que pour diriger les bureaux, les provinces et les dignités civiles consistoriales.

Cette situation est celle d'une dépendance mutuelle : d'un côté un besoin vital pour les empereurs ; de l'autre un moyen de promotion et d'existence sociale au plus haut niveau pour les lettrés. Celle-ci culmine avec l'exercice d'un double don sous forme d'échange. D'un côté, les lettrés pratiquent l'art du panégyrique, qui exalte simultanément la personne et la fonction impériales, mais aussi la *parrhēsia*, dont ils semblent les seuls habilités à disposer. De l'autre, les empereurs distribuent des fonctions, soit par confiance, soit pour récompenser des services. Mais ils le font aussi car les lettrés possèdent de vastes réseaux d'amis parmi lesquels circule l'information : maîtres, élèves, parents, amis[70]. Pour les empereurs, donc, avoir des lettrés dans leur entourage donne l'assurance de recevoir de multiples informations utiles, indispensables, voire vitales pour gouverner[71].

Par là même, le langage joue un rôle crucial dans l'exercice du pouvoir. Les empereurs le punissent ou le récompensent, et les lettrés perçoivent fort bien où se trouve leur intérêt, ainsi que leurs intérêts. La position de certains est si prestigieuse qu'ils peuvent se permettre, au-delà des éloges convenus, de pratiquer l'encouragement, la supplique, la critique voire l'admonestation. Ce fut le cas de Thémistios, de Libanios, de Paulin de Nole et d'Ambroise. Si les deux premiers furent écoutés, ce dernier fut en outre craint. Car, fils de la *paideia* comme les autres, Ambroise était un rhéteur évêque, particulièrement présent dans l'entourage de Théodose, qui en ressentit d'autant plus le poids qu'il était baptisé. Cette relation témoigne d'un glissement particulièrement important à la fin du IVe siècle, puisque la relation entre empereurs et lettrés s'infusait désormais d'une nouvelle dimension : les empereurs étaient chrétiens et les

70 Voir T. Moreau et A. Bodin, eds., *Réseaux sociaux et contraintes dans l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris, Revue d'Etudes tardo-antiques, St 1, 2014).

71 Sur ce point, voir Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, pp. 57-58.

évêques des lettrés. De quoi instituer une nouvelle forme de relation et d'équilibre entre le politique et le religieux. Incontestablement, la donne était changée avec Théodose, car baptisé à Thessalonique au début de son règne, celui-ci se trouva comptable de son baptême devant les évêques : il n'était en effet plus, comme Constantin, un « évêque du dehors », mais un *prince du dedans*. Cela fait dire à Théodoret qu'Ambroise admira Théodose pour son obéissance et que Théodose admira Ambroise pour sa franchise[72]. La *paideia* gagna certes une éphémère suprématie dans la mesure où elle était portée par des évêques de grand rayonnement. Mais le danger fut semble-t-il vite écarté par le pouvoir impérial en Orient : en témoigne le bannissement de Jean Chrysostome au début du Ve siècle, qui signifie le rejet de la *parrhēsia*, qui n'était ni plus ni moins que le retrait d'un des piliers de la *paideia*. Ce rejet entraîna un silence, ce silence qui avait régné sous Constance II au dire de Symmaque : « Nulle part le silence n'était aussi profond que dans le sanctuaire des belles-lettres »[73]. Cette remarque entre en résonance avec celle d'Ammien Marcellin qui jugeait, dans sa diatribe contre le mode de vie des habitants de Rome, leurs bibliothèques fermées à dessein comme des tombeaux[74]. L'atmosphère policière entretenue par les notaires et les *agentes in rebus* de Constance II avait répandu « la maladie des bouches cousues » (*tacendi morbus*), écrit-il. Et dans son plaidoyer *pro domo*, le sénateur orateur de lancer la question à des empereurs qui se priveraient des rhéteurs : *Quid est gloria, si tacetur?* (« Qu'est-ce que la gloire, si elle est tue? »)[75]. On pourrait ajouter : qu'est-ce que la république? Il voulait dire qu'assurément, le silence, écrit ou oral, ne pouvait être que l'effet d'une tyrannie. Mais surtout que les rhéteurs étaient les seuls qui pussent œuvrer pour la perpétuation de la gloire impériale et des vertus indispensables de la *paideia*. La fin du IVe siècle et le début du Ve lanceraient-il les derniers feux de la *parrhēsia*? Lorsque Attale fut capturé sur un bateau en 415, Honorius lui fit couper le pouce et peut-être un autre doigt avant de le reléguer dans une des îles Lipari[76]. Dans son texte sur Galla Placidia, l'érudit du XIXe siècle Amédée Thierry en inférait que c'était pour l'empêcher dorénavant d'écrire[77]. Si rien ne

72 Théodoret de Cyr, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.17, ed. et trad. A. Martin, P. Canivet, e.a. (Paris, 2006).

73 Symmaque, *Oratio 2 ad Valentinianum* 29, in Symmaque*, Discours, Rapports*, ed. and trans. J.-P. Callu (Paris, 2009) : *Nusquam maius silentium quam in sacrariis litterarum*.

74 Ammien Marcellin 14.6 : *et bibliothecis sepulcrorum ritu in perpetuum clausis*.

75 Symmaque, *Oratio 2 ad Valentinianum* 30.

76 Philostorge, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 13.5 ; Prosper, *Chronicon*, a.416.

77 A. Thierry, « Aventures d'une fille de Théodose, Placidie », in idem, *Saint Jérôme, la société chrétienne à Rome et l'émigration romaine en Terre sainte* (Paris, 1867), vol. 2, p. 302.

pouvait cependant l'empêcher de dicter – une pratique alors courante –, l'hypothèse est néanmoins intéressante car cette mutilation lui interdisait d'écrire de sa propre main et de transmettre une *memoria* individuelle.

Une question se trouve ainsi posée : pour n'être plus cousues, les bouches du Vᵉ siècle ne seraient-elles pas devenues serviles pour demeurer ouvertes ? Ce serait là l'objet d'une autre étude. Pour ce qui est du IVᵉ siècle, il est remarquable que, dans l'entourage impérial, la culture détermine l'autorité. C'est elle qui, par le truchement des lettrés, garantit de bons princes et des temps heureux. Lorsque les empereurs n'écoutent pas ceux qui l'incarnent, ils versent dans la tyrannie. C'est là un plaidoyer *pro domo* car ce sont les lettrés eux-mêmes qui le disent, s'érigeant, évêques compris, en piliers de la *res publica*. On pourrait donc dire que l'Empire romain est, au IVᵉ siècle, un empire culturel, et que la *militia philosophorum* des empereurs se veut la plus haute garantie de ce que Rufin appelle une « *censura* la plus digne du nom Romain »[78].

78 Rufin, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 10.8 : *censura dignissima Romani nominis* (à propos de Constantin).

CHAPTER 4

Gregory's Governors: *Paideia* and Patronage in Cappadocia

Neil McLynn

1 Gregory's Collection of Letters

In this paper I shall test the strength of the magic of *paideia* by examining a particularly rich dossier which illustrates the means used by a cultured provincial to lobby his governors. In his collected correspondence Gregory Nazianzen included thirteen letters addressed to Olympius, governor of Cappadocia II; all of these relate to the latter's term of office, which ran for roughly a year, from mid-382 to mid-383. Most of the letters (seven of the thirteen) are intercessions, requesting consideration for a miscellaneous procession due to appear before the governor's tribunal. Only one of the defendants seems innocent, a wronged widow seeking redress; the rest are in various degrees acknowledged guilty—the wretched Paul, the fear-crippled Eustratius, the defrocked priest Leontius and Aurelius, a runaway 'soldier' who had 'rebelled' against Olympius' authority—but still receive a plea for lenient treatment. The purpose of this paper is to consider Gregory's relationship with the governor, and the way he presents this in his letter collection.[1]

Olympius is prominent among Gregory's correspondents. His tally of thirteen letters received, from a total of some 245, puts him equal second (with Gregory's metropolitan bishop Theodore of Tyana) behind only Basil of Caesarea. What is more, Olympius is the first governor of Gregory's own province to qualify for inclusion. This marks a significant shift. Several secular officials had featured in the correspondence of the 360s and 370s, but none of these had governed Cappadocia; nor does any such correspondence survive from the first year of Gregory's return to his city after the Council of Constantinople. Olympius' successors, moreover, are represented by far fewer letters, even though the collection probably contains at least as many items from after his term than from

1 For a recent sketch of the relationship, see R. Van Dam, *Kingdom of Snow: Roman Rule and Greek Culture in Cappadocia* (Philadelphia, 2002), pp. 84–86. J.A. McGuckin, *St. Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography* (Crestwood, NY, 2001), p. 396, notes the 'lively correspondence'; see also P. Gallay, *La vie de Grégoire de Nazianze* (Lyon, 1943), pp. 220–224.

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during it.[2] In a useful analysis of the evidence for Cappadocian administrators, Raymond Van Dam identifies four other possible governors of the province among Gregory's correspondents from the 380s.[3] However, two of these should be eliminated. Asterius served as Olympius's assessor, and there is no evidence that he ever held office independently;[4] and Hecebolius, although 'nearby' and endowed with 'excellence in office', is clearly not directly responsible for the case in which Gregory tries to involve him, and must either be the governor of a neighbouring province or else a distinguished ex-official, living locally in retirement.[5] This leaves, as governors of Gregory's province of Cappadocia II, Nemesius (with four surviving letters, one subsequent to the expiry of his term) and Gregorius (with one, offered in lieu of a welcome address).[6]

This prosopographical pruning is of some importance for an assessment of the correspondence with Olympius and its place in Gregory's epistolary anthology. Although the contents of the letter collection are variously shuffled in the different branches of the manuscript tradition, none of which preserve the original form, two dedicatory letters to his great-nephew Nicobulus give important information about its shape and character. Gregory here presents the collection as 'something handy for literary studies', and organised so as to showcase in particular his correspondence with, and humble devotion to,

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2 P. Gallay, ed., *Saint-Grégoire de Nazianze: Lettres* (Paris, 1964–1967), assigns 38 letters to 382, 25 to 383, eight to after 383, 27 to Gregory's 'last years', and 33 to 'uncertain' or 'indeterminate' date; the numbers are imprecise but indicative.

3 R. Van Dam, "Governors of Cappadocia during the Fourth Century," *Medieval Prosopography* 17.1 (1996), pp. 7–93; cf. M.-M. Hauser-Meury, *Prosopographie zu den Schriften Gregors von Nazianz* (Bonn, 1960).

4 Hauser-Meury, *Prosopographie*, pp. 34–35. Van Dam, "Governors of Cappadocia," pp. 41–42; idem, *Kingdom of Snow*, p. 75 and p. 221 n. 4, questions this, but Gregory's expression at *Epist.* 148.5, γνησίου κοινωνοῦ τῆς ἀρχῆς (cf. *Epist.* 143.5 to Olympius, introducing an unnamed κοινωνόν σοι καὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ τῆς εὐδοξίας), cannot refer to a separate subordinate magistracy; and Asterius' departure at the end of his term (*Epist.* 155) indicates that he was not a resident *cohortalis*. The reference to him as a κοινὸν … ἡμῖν εὐεργέτην τε καὶ συνάρχοντα (*Epist.* 150.3) does not indicate an equal rank to the governor; Gregory elsewhere shows Olympius himself 'governing with' Christ (*Oratio* 17.8: Χριστῷ συνάρχεις).

5 At *Epist.* 196.1 Gregory reproaches himself for overlooking the availability nearby of someone worth seeking out τῆς τε ἀρχικῆς ἀρετῆς εἵνεκα καὶ τῆς ἄλλης ἡμερότητος; he represents the elder Nicobulus as a loyal servant τοῖς ἄρχουσιν ὑμῖν, to governors in general rather than of Cappadocia in particular (*Epist.* 196.4); nor does he anywhere suggest that Hecebolius had jurisdiction over the case in question. For discussion see Van Dam, "Governors of Cappadocia," pp. 52–53; cf. Hauser-Meury *Prosopographie*, p. 40.

6 *Epist.* 195: see below, n. 11.

Basil of Caesarea.[7] It seems, moreover, to have represented the culmination of a deliberate programme of epistolographic tuition.[8] Artfulness has rarely been recognized in Gregory's collection (as opposed to his individual letters), because scholars have accepted too readily not only his casual disclaimer to Nicobulus that he had simply assembled what was available, gathering 'such of my letters as was possible', but also his self-representation as an aged Nestor, returning to a battlefield he had long renounced: the edition is therefore generally consigned to the depths of his definitive retirement.[9] But the only evidence for this late date would be the inclusion of a series of governors after Olympius; otherwise, no item can be independently dated later than 384. So if Hecebolius and Asterius are eliminated from the Cappadocian fasti (and assuming a succession of one-year terms, beginning in spring), Nemesius' term can be assigned to 383–384 (as seems necessary on other grounds)[10] and the last datable item, to Gregorius, probably belongs to mid-384; moreover, this letter was delivered by Nicobulus himself, and contained an urgent plea for a favourable judgment in a suit against the latter's family following the death of his father, also named Nicobulus, the husband of Gregory's niece.[11] The letter to Hecebolius also introduces Nicobulus in reference to the same case, and should be assigned to the same date; the family's troubles would provide an appropriate occasion for advertizing their standing in the world of letters. No decisive resolution is possible, but nothing prevents acceptance of the least complicated hypothesis, that the sum of letters we possess is only slightly expanded from the volume which Gregory sent to Nicobulus, and that

7 *Epist.* 52–53. For suggestions about the presentation of the correspondence with Basil, see N. McLynn, "Gregory Nazianzen's Basil: The Literary Construction of a Christian Friendship," *Studia Patristica* 37 (2001), 178–193.

8 *Epist.* 51, 54 are usually seen as afterthoughts on the art of letter-writing: Gallay, ed., *Lettres* 1: 126–127; they are explained better as preliminary exchanges, which on publication would also have served to embed Nicobulus in the collection.

9 *Epist.* 52.2–3. J. Bernardi, *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze: Le théologien et son temps (330–390)* (Paris, 1995), pp. 247–248; P. Gallay, *Les manuscrits des lettres de Saint Grégoire de Nazianze* (Paris, 1957), pp. 9–14.

10 Gregory presents himself as an active churchman at *Carm.* 2.2.7, 21 (θυηπόλον ἄνδρ': cf. 2.1.13, p. 111; 2.34, p. 99) and, I would argue, *Epist.* 199 (see below, n. 78); he had retired from his bishopric by summer 383. Van Dam dates Nemesius' term to the 'mid- or late 380s': Van Dam, "Governors of Cappadocia," p. 62; idem, *Kingdom of Snow*, p. 86; cf. Hauser-Meury, *Prosopographie*, p. 128.

11 At *Epist.* 195.1 Gregory speaks of the welcome address which he would have delivered, had his health permitted.

Gregory issued this shortly after the last datable letters, so probably in 384/5.[12] Various important consequences, concerning Gregory's relations not only with Olympius but also with Nemesius, flow from such a position.

2 Gregory and Olympius: A Special Relationship?

Gregory's dealings with Olympius, as reflected in his correspondence, involved an unusually high level of drama. The three longest letters in the dossier each presents an emergency which would otherwise be wholly unknown to us. One is a domestic crisis, relating to the elder Nicobulus (the problems caused by whose death merely continued a pattern established much earlier), which calls forth more impassioned eloquence than his troubles usually warranted: Gregory implores the governor to save him and his sons from the threat of what he labels 'slavery' (*Epist*. 146). A second involves danger for Gregory's church, after a group of heretics had installed one of their own number as bishop there (*Epist*. 125). Finally, and most dramatically of all, Gregory's whole city is faced with extinction, following a riot there (*Epist*. 141). These would seem to amount to more than an ordinary year's dealings between an average provincial bishop and his governor.[13] Nor can they be taken as a straightforward expression of the opportunities available to a Christian lobbyist when a pious governor ruled his province.[14] It is therefore important to establish the basis upon which the two men conducted their dealings.

For this looks like a most untypical relationship which flourished in an unusual way. We might furthermore suspect that Gregory highlights it as he

12 Gallay, *Les Manuscrits des Lettres*, pp. 13–14, notes that Gregory (or later editors) might have added items to the initial compilation; but only eleven (authentic) letters are missing from one or more of the diverse branches of the tradition.

13 D. Slootjes, *The Governor and his Subjects in the Later Roman Empire* (Leiden, 2006), p. 89, treats the relationship as representative; cf. C. Vogler, "L'administration impériale dans la correspondance de saint Basile et saint Grégoire de Naziance," in M. Christol, S. Demougin, Y. Duval, C. Lepelley, and L. Pietri, eds., *Institutions société et vie politique dans l'Empire Romain au IVe siècle ap. J.-C.: Actes de la table ronde autour de l'oeuvre d'André Chastagnol, Paris, janvier 1989* (Roma, 1992), pp. 447–464 ('Grégoire s'addresse avec prédilection. . . .': p. 451).

14 N. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 11–12, saw Gregory exploiting his leverage over the conscience of a devoutly Christian governor; Van Dam, *Kingdom of Snow*, pp. 85–86, emphasized the Christian basis of the relationship. Only a few of the letters (*Epist*. 104, 140, 141) introduce explicitly Christian themes.

does precisely because it was so unusually intimate a relationship. Gregory, we should bear in mind, did not know Olympius before the latter's term;[15] Nazianzus was some 58 Roman miles (a three days' journey, according to the itineraries)[16] from the governor's normal residence at Tyana, and as far as we know he never visited him there, while Olympius paid only a few visits to Gregory's city.[17] But Olympius' term also witnessed a crucial transition in Gregory's career. When the governor arrived in Cappadocia, Gregory was still insisting that he was in 'retreat' from the turbulence of public affairs, enjoying 'trouble-free rest':[18] he was still maintaining that he was not bishop of Nazianzus, as those who had forced him to resign from Constantinople the previous year had declared. But when Olympius departed Gregory had resumed the bishopric, and would manage his own definitive resignation, on the conditions that he had decreed, soon after. It will be suggested here that it was thanks to Olympius that Gregory became able to play the bishop on his own terms;[19] and that this success is commemorated, and celebrated, in his letter collection.

The single most conspicuous episode, in terms of physical prominence in the collection, is the drama of the riot. Gregory's appeal on behalf of his city, *Epist*. 141, is the longest by far of the letters to Olympius (64 lines of text in the modern critical edition, nearly twice the length of its closest rival), and by far the most rhetorical. Gregory acknowledges that he is being 'reckless' and 'audacious' (both terms otherwise reserved for overtures to very senior officials)[20] in conducting by letter business that should properly be done in person, explaining his conduct by his illness;[21] Olympius' business is meanwhile

15 This is made clear in *Epist*. 131, where Gregory bases his praise of Olympius exclusively on his performance in office to date.

16 *Itinerarium Burdigalense* 577: P. Geyer and O. Cuntz, eds., *Itineraria et Alia Geographica* (CCSL 175: Turnhout, 1965), p. 10; cf. *Itinerarium Antoninianum* 144.5.

17 Gregory once stayed for several days at 'the *mansio*' (of Nazianzus: cf. *Epist*. 68.1, 133.1) in the hope of meeting Olympius (*Epist*. 126.1); when touring the province the governor would not necessarily stay in the city itself. The Bordeaux Itinerary (cited in previous note) refers to Nazianzus as a *mansio* rather than a city.

18 *Epist*. 131.2: Ἀπράγμων . . . ἡσυχία.

19 Van Dam, *Kingdom of Snow*, p. 86, suggests instead that Gregory's definitive resignation from his post was occasioned by dismay at Olympius' departure. This overestimates Gregory's freedom of action.

20 *Epist*. 141.1: πάλιν ἐγὼ τολμηρὸς . . . The term is found elsewhere only in his overtures to the senior generals Victor and Saturninus (*Epp*. 132–133).

21 *Epist*. 141.1: Ποιεῖ γάρ με θρασὺν ἡ νόσος; providence (and his correspondent's gentleness) serves as the basis for a similar disclaimer to the *magister officiorum* Palladius (*Epist*. 170).

philanthrōpia, and 'gentleness', the latter a particularly resonant theme.[22] Gregory then moves into philosophy, a meditation on mortality: the death of a man is a terrible thing, but far more terrible the death of a city, one which kings had founded and which the years had solidified. He then introduces his personified city herself, to fall at the governor's feet, as in a drama, and beseech the governor not to 'give occasion to posterity to speak evil of you, that you received me numbered among cities, and left me a desert . . .' To the imaginary city's voice is added the advice of a friend. The governor should punish the actively disobedient, but should be guided by 'reason rather than anger'; he should show respect for the citizens, for their leaders, and for Gregory himself. But the decision, Gregory emphasized, rested with Olympius, and he would accept this.

The tone throughout is most impressive, and will have seemed more so to pre-modern readers of the collection. For although the letters to Olympius are arranged rather differently in the different branches of the tradition, in every single case this is the first of the series.[23] This must reflect an early stage, and is very likely to reflect Gregory's own arrangement of the letters. However, the impression that is given of a sudden crisis is misleading. This is in fact Gregory's second intercession during the affair, and the earlier (*Epist*. 142) is couched much like Gregory's other appeals to the governor's tribunal. His illness is here a much more routine matter, and his epistolary 'embassy' casually demands that Olympius show consideration for his poor health and his old age; on this basis he urges the governor to 'spare' (an unadorned imperative again suffices) the city councillors, *politeuomenoi*, and to spare also (the brisk command is simply repeated) 'the others' who were under his care. No harm would come from *philanthrōpia*, since Olympius could make his point more effectively by instilling fear than by actually inflicting punishment. The stark contrast between Gregory's briskness here and the baroque apocalypticism of the subsequent plea, where nothing less than a city's survival is at stake, cannot be entirely explained by the escalation which had certainly occurred between the two, for the city already faced sanctions when Gregory first intervened.[24] There was an element of theatre in the correspondence. In the

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22 *Epist*. 141.2 invites Olympius to receive his embassy ἡμέρως καὶ φιλανθρώπως. Of sixteen variants upon the former term in Gregory's letters, five are addressed to Olympius; no fewer than eight of the letters to Olympius invoke the governor's *philanthropia*.

23 P. Gallay, *Les manuscrits des lettres*, p. 18 (family u: no. 193); 31 (family v: no. 190); 48 (family d: no. 32); 55 (family f: number 29); 64 (family g: number 197); 71 (family h: no. 150).

24 N.B. McLynn, "Curiales into Churchmen: The Case of Gregory Nazianzen": in R. Lizzi Testa, ed., *Le trasformazioni delle élites in età tardoantica: atti del convegno internazionale, Perugia, 15–16 marzo 2004* (Roma, 2006), pp. 277–295, at pp. 283–287.

later letter, Gregory was probably addressing himself not only to Olympius, but also (and perhaps in response to signals from the governor) to the very notables of Nazianzus on whose behalf he was ostensibly writing.

Mutual understanding between Gregory and Olympius becomes apparent in the denouement, when the governor arrived in Nazianzus to deliver his verdict, and was greeted with Gregory's sermon, 'To the anxious councillors of Nazianzus and the angry governor'.[25] And in this speech Gregory does not exactly plead his city's case, let alone rise to the rhetorical level of his letter. He speaks first to the congregation: about sorrow, about consolation and (above all) about the need to recognize one's place and to submit to authority. No defence is offered for those who had rebelled against this. The earlier protests, he says instead, had been as futile as if a sportsman were to commit a foul and then complain about the referee, or if a gravely ill patient were to complain about his doctor for prescribing the drastic treatment that he needed (*Or.* 17.7). Such was the preacher's (somewhat cold) 'consolation and instruction' to the anxious councillors. He then turned solemnly to the judge, proclaiming that everything depended on Olympius' willingness—as 'a holy sheep from my holy flock', an honorary member of the congregation (*Or.* 17.8)—to listen patiently to his plain speaking.[26]

But this is a charade. We can be sure, from the organization and rhythm of the speech, that Olympius had already decided for clemency, and that Gregory knew this. It seems equally clear that the people of Nazianzus were not yet party to the decision. Through the first half of the speech, Gregory's studied calm plays on the suspense; when he then addresses Olympius, he bathes him in a spotlight such as he had never (to our knowledge) allowed the emperor Theodosius when preaching in Constantinople.[27] This was the governor's chance to become a god (*Or.* 17.9). The task was easy, he says, requiring only a minor display of entirely legitimate *philanthropia*; and forgiveness was the safer as well as the better course (*Or.* 17.10–11). But this is but the beginning of a protracted conclusion, where Gregory first asks whether Olympius, who had

25 *Oratio* 17 (PG 35: 963–982). This speech is regularly misdated to the early 370s, most recently by M.M. Vinson, *St Gregory of Nazianzus: Select Orations* (Fathers of the Church 107: Washington, DC, 2003), p. 85; see McLynn, "Curiales into Churchmen", p. 285.

26 He also calls him 'the nursling of the great shepherd': the reference is to the bishop of Tyana, the metropolitan of the province (as in *Oratio* 13.3).

27 For a sermon preached before Theodosius, see N. McLynn, "Moments of Truth: Gregory Nazianzen and Theodosius I," in S. McGill, C. Sogno and E.J. Watts, ed., *Continuity and Change from the Tetrarchy to the Age of Theodosius II* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 215–239, at pp. 229–231.

often protested himself 'in love' with his eloquence, was persuaded; then he brings forward an appeal to his own venerable personage and his priesthood, and one ('daring') to Christ himself, and yet another to the altar 'which we approach together' (*Or*. 17.12).[28] After each successive plea there is room for Olympius to consider—but Gregory does not declare victory even after he has finally presented the whole congregation, his 'suppliants' (*Or*. 17.13). But if the speech seems to fade out into anticlimax, this is because Gregory has simply been preparing the platform from which Olympius would deliver his verdict. 'Letters' and power are therefore complementary in this speech: Gregory is closer to the governor than to his own constituency. But this raises the question, how such proximity was established: the episode presupposes a remarkable level of mutual trust between Gregory and Olympius.[29]

Another aspect of Gregory's collaboration with the governor is apparent in his letter to him on the case of Verianus, a citizen of Nazianzus who had compelled his happily-married daughter to sue for divorce (*Epist*. 144). Before issuing a ruling, Olympius had invited Gregory to investigate and mediate: 'not as a judge but as a bishop.' To Verianus Gregory urges forcefully, in a letter which has been much admired, the better course (*Epist*. 145); but to Olympius he implicitly confesses the futility of his plea. While insisting to both men that his commission was to stop the divorce, he neither provides Olympius any legal grounds for doing so (having evidently failed to persuade the daughter to withdraw her suit) nor threatens Verianus with any ecclesiastical sanctions that might compel him to stay his hand. Gregory's shrewd sensitivity towards the bride's tearful reluctance and towards her helplessness before her filial obligations has been appreciated;[30] the inference has been drawn that Gregory successfully blocked the divorce.[31] But the evidence points the other way, for the texts show him deliberately disengaged, regretfully washing his hands. Here too, moreover, the drama presented in these letters seems at least partly stage-managed. A bishop did not usually communicate with his parishioners in writing: the letter to Verianus reads like an appendix to that to Olympius, testifying

28 The occasion recalls the climax to Gregory's installation in the cathedral at Constantinople, with Theodosius beside him in the sanctuary: *De Vita Sua* (*Carm*. 2.1.11) 1360–1363; cf. McLynn, "Moments of Truth," pp. 217–218; N.B. McLynn, "The Transformations of Imperial Churchgoing in the Fourth Century," in M. Edwards and S. Swain, eds., *Approaching Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 235–270, at pp. 258–259.

29 McLynn's suggestion ("Curiales into Churchmen," p. 287) that the episode marked the beginning of the special relationship is to be discarded.

30 J. Harries, *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 206.

31 McGuckin, *St. Gregory*, p. 396.

to his stern conscientiousness.[32] Gregory is here exhibiting his hard-won ability to avoid collisions between his own moral perfectionism and the demands of 'the laws of the Romans'; at another level, the affair can be seen as the converse of all his requests for Olympius on behalf of miscreants; Olympius assigns him tasks to perform in return, and he fulfils these punctiliously.

The episode concerning Nicobulus shows Gregory exploiting this relationship on behalf of his own family—and once again presupposes that it was already well established. The case had begun when Gregory, again writing from his sick-bed, explained how he had 'found' his Nicobulus suffering from his 'charge of the *mansio*', and urged the governor to secure his release (*Epist.* 126.3). But although Nicobulus evidently secured his discharge, the subsequent letter (the two are bracketed together in all branches of the tradition) indicates that this triggered a reaction, for Nicobulus stood accused before the governor following some unspecified misbehaviour by his slaves, which is most easily explained as a charge of misconduct in his management of the *mansio* (*Epist.* 146.5).[33] As a result, he and his heirs faced the loss of their exemptions from service in the city council, a fate which Gregory instinctively translated as 'slavery'.[34] Gregory's heavy-handed irony at the expense of Nicobulus' accuser, when he recalls that he had recently interceded with the governor on behalf of this fellow, suggests that he was one of the councillors on whose behalf he had appealed. If so, we might sympathize with his resentment at Nicobulus' egregious dereliction of duty, especially since the vacancy thus created presumably became the council's responsibility. Moreover, the case against Nicobulus was obviously strong. Gregory reinforced his letter to Olympius with another to the governor's assessor Asterius (*Epist.* 147), in which he dwelt more insistently upon the bitter paradox whereby he could protect strangers but not his own family, adopting a cavalier disregard for Roman law to suggest that if properly investigated the alleged offence would prove insignificant, but that in any case it was unfair to hold Nicobulus responsible for the misdeeds of his subordinates.[35] Gregory's anxiety concerning the outcome is apparent in a further letter to Asterius, where he effectively abandons argument in favour of importunate supplication (*Epist.* 148). There is no indication, significantly, that Gregory had known Asterius before Olympius' term, or that their dealings

32 Gregory apparently consigned the case to Olympius *before* writing to Verianus (*Epist.* 144.4).

33 For further discussion see McLynn, "Curiales into Churchmen," pp. 288–290.

34 McGuckin, *St. Gregory*, p. 395 n. 139.

35 *Epist.* 147.6: Gregory phrased the argument much more cautiously to Olympius at *Epist.* 146.5.

continued beyond it; the assessor presumably accompanied Olympius on his provincial tours, and encountered Gregory through these.

3 Gregory and the Apollinarists: From Crisis to Opportunity

These letters thus show an unusual relationship in action, with Gregory and Olympius able to act out roles together, and make significant calls on each other. This level of trust and mutual understanding did not develop automatically. Nor is there anything to foreshadow it in a letter which Gregory wrote early in Olympius's term (he congratulates him 'on the beginnings of your rule'), asking the governor to certify his illness (*Epist.* 131). This was during the early summer of 382, when Gregory faced an unpalatable summons to attend the council being convened at Constantinople that June: participation in what was billed as a supplementary session of the great council of the previous year would not only undermine his declarations that he had retired, but sanction the decisions of the gathering which had driven him from the capital and (in his view) befouled the trinity. He recruits Olympius as a 'trustworthy witness' to his parlous state of health, and invites him to testify to the *vicarius* of Pontus, who had delivered the invitation and was apparently unimpressed by Gregory's protestations.[36] But the only evidence made available to Olympius was Gregory's failure to run to him and enjoy his company: the two men had apparently not yet met. The terms of the letter are also much more cautious than those of the corresponding one, to a certain Procopius, in which Gregory frankly avows his determination 'to flee every gathering of bishops';[37] since Procopius is invited to report directly to the emperor, he was probably the same *vicarius* with whom Gregory had dealt before turning to Olympius.[38] The governor, at this stage, was not his patron of first resort.

However, there is another letter which also belongs to the early stages of Olympius' term. This is Gregory's appeal to the governor to rescue him from the Apollinarist heretics who have seized the see of Nazianzus (*Epist.* 125). Even in old age, he explained, he had fallen victim to new tricks. Although knowing better than anyone the heretical beliefs of the Apollinarists, he had

36 That invitations were delivered at the level of the *diocesis* is suggested by the rescript cited at the council of Aquileia in 381, which spoke of an original summons of bishops *ex diocesi meritis excellentiae tuae credita* (*Acta Concilii Aquilensis* 3). Gregory complains of not being believed at *Epist.* 131.1.

37 *Epist.* 130.2.

38 Various possibilities are canvassed by Van Dam, "Governors of Cappadocia," p. 66.

decided to adopt a policy of gentleness in the hope of taming them. This had only made matters worse, and now the 'wretched heretics' had exploited his temporary absence for a thermal cure and dared to consecrate, through some renegade bishops, one of their number as bishop at Nazianzus; Olympius was urged to set matters right.

This affair is often seen as a straightforward demand by an embattled bishop for routine enforcement of Theodosian legislation—and has therefore been dated impossibly late.[39] However, it was most definitely not a straightforward request. This is clear from the care with which Gregory builds his case. He takes nothing for granted. He invokes his doctors to explain his failure to come in person to Olympius (and explains exactly where he is), and peppers the letter with parenthetical qualifications and assurances: 'as it seems' (twice), 'be sure', 'I cannot say exactly', 'I think', 'it must be called this'.[40] But the key to the letter is the choice with which Gregory leaves Olympius. If the situation was bearable, let the governor tolerate it, and Gregory would too, schooled as he was in endurance; but if it was serious and something that the emperors themselves could not bear, then the governor should respond. Gregory does all he can to tilt the balance, by thus daring the governor to second-guess Theodosius. He had already invoked the imperial perspective, proclaiming (with telling vagueness) that the heretics' initiative was 'in violation of all Imperial Ordinances'; he added that they had also defied Olympius' own 'commands', but seems unable to develop the point or to match the grim equation he presents elsewhere (*Epist*. 141.5), between defiance of the governor's commands and unequivocal culpability.

What Gregory does not say is equally important. He makes no mention in the letter of his own title to the see. We should infer that his claim was not, at the time, straightforward. Neither, moreover, does he mention the other Cappadocian bishops, to whom belonged formal responsibility for any consecrations in the province. Yet when he departed for his cure, Gregory had appealed for help in meeting the Apollinarist menace (the heretics were 'now

39 Gallay *La vie de Grégoire*, pp. 220–222, followed by McGuckin, *St. Gregory*, pp. 389–390, dated it to after September 383, on the assumption that the first anti-Apollinarist legislation, *CTh* 16.5.12, must already have been applicable. *Epist*. 173 shows that Gregory had retired definitively by the early summer of 383: see Gallay, ed., *Lettres*, 2: 61.

40 The only non-parenthetical imperatives are in the final two sentences, in each case the cautious apodosis of a condition: *Epist*. 125.6: εἰ μὲν ἀνεκτά, ἐνεγκάτω μὲν ἡ σὴ στερρότης· … Εἰ δὲ βαρέα … ἐπεξελθεῖν … καταξίωσον. Contrast the commands in *Epist*. 141.6 τίμησον (cf. 7); The language of reluctant endurance is more tentative at *Epist*. p. 125.6 (οἴσομεν δὲ καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ πολλάκις ἠνέγκαμεν) than at *Epist*. 141.11: Ἡμεῖς δὲ τὸ παραστὰν οἴσομεν, οὐκ ἀλύπως μέν, οἴσομεν δέ.

looming', and having already done some damage were now threatening some more) from Theodore of Tyana, the metropolitan of Cappadocia II, identifying him as the decisive authority: 'If the province had any other head, it would be necessary to shout an appeal to that', as Gregory himself protested (*Epist.* 152.5).[41] It is therefore of some significance that when the Apollinarists made their move, he turned instead to Olympius, and that in urging the governor to intervene he sought authority in the views of Theodosius rather than those of Theodore, whose cathedral the pious Olympius probably frequented.[42] This is a puzzle which deserves attention, since no intruder at Nazianzus could gain any permanent purchase unless the provincial episcopate offered tokens of legitimacy.

The answer is that in leaving Nazianzus Gregory had violated a solemn pledge which had been extracted from shortly beforehand, that he would 'have care of the church'. He had written to Theodore and to Bosporius, bishop of Colonia and so his closest colleague in the province, to announce that he was surrendering to pressure and undertaking the charge of the church of Nazianzus—precisely because of the 'attack which is expected from the enemy' (*Epist.* 138.3, to Bosporius), and 'since the enemy are threatening an onslaught aimed to do harm to the common interest of the whole church' (*Epist.* 139.5, to Theodore).[43] These enemies must be the Apollinarists. In a poem written at the same time he denied that he had ever 'made light of' his father's throne, and declared himself now Christ's chained prisoner, neck bent in submission.[44] It was because Gregory had reneged on this agreement to take responsibility that he felt unable to call upon the bishops of Cappadocia for support.

Gregory's critics might have suggested, furthermore, that the crisis was of his own making. For even while obstinately refusing to undertake the pastoral chores at Nazianzus to which his opponents at Constantinople had consigned him, he had received there 'fraternally'—that is, had shared communion

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41 This letter must precede *Epist.* 125 (had the Apollinarists already attempted a consecration at Nazianzus, Gregory would have said so); it demonstrates that Nazianzus still belonged to Cappadocia II in 382, contrary to the widely-accepted thesis of a temporary reunion of the two Cappadocian provinces presented by E. Honigmann, *Trois mémoires posthumes d'histoire et de géographie de l'Orient chrétien* (Bruxelles, 1961), pp. 38–41; cf. Van Dam, "Governors of Cappadocia," p. 10.

42 He refers to him as Theodore's 'nursling': above, n. 26.

43 Gallay's date for these letters, the end of 382 (*Lettres* 2: 26–27; *La vie de Grégoire*, p. 220), is too precise: they could belong to any time from summer 382.

44 *Carm.* 2.1.19. 51, 80–81. The Apollinarist danger is mentioned at 69–71. For discussion, see C. Simelidis, ed., *Selected Poems of Gregory of Nazianzus: I.2.17; II.1.10, 19, 32: A Critical Edition with Introduction and Commentary* (Göttingen, 2009), pp. 167–218.

with—certain disciples of Apollinaris.[45] He had based this initial reception, moreover, on a creed presented by the visitors.[46] This was, without question, a calculated decision. There had been, as another critic of the council of Constantinople would point out, no formal discussion of the Apollinarists' tenets there.[47] Gregory (who had since his return to Nazianzus been advertizing the dangerous implications of these beliefs—not least because this provided an opportunity to identify converse Christological errors in the heart of the 'orthodox' coalition who had defeated him at Constantinople)[48] could thus hope for the best of both worlds, in hosting a victims' seminar which would expose the flaws of the hateful synod, while at the same time prevailing in any theological debate that ensued. It was a sign of his confidence, but also of his determination to maintain a clear distance from any pastoral involvement at Nazianzus, that he conducted this debate by proxy. The two lengthy 'Theological Letters', which would duly be canonized as the classic orthodox response to Apollinaris, reflect a most peculiar situation, where Gregory left a deputy to deal, by persuasion, with a problem which he could have eliminated by a single display of authority.[49] The letters also indicate the local tensions thus produced, as members of the church of Nazianzus began looking to the visitors for the pastoral leadership which Gregory was so signally failing to provide.[50]

This is the context in which the Apollinarist 'threat' to Nazianzus emerged, and explains why Gregory was put under so much pressure by his colleagues to acknowledge, at least provisionally, his responsibilities to his city. His departure, soon after having reluctantly bowed to these demands, for a thermal cure at Xanxaris (the location is not known, but it is unlikely to have been far from

45 Gregory faces the charge directly at *Epist*. 101.69: τὴν τῶν αἱρετικῶν κοινωνίαν; cf. *Epist*. 101.7: ἀδελφικῶς αὐτοὺς ἑωρῶμεν.

46 He countered criticism of 'earlier accepting, but now rejecting the faith of the beloved Vitalius' at *Epist*. 102.6; cf. pp. 16–17. McGuckin, *St. Gregory*, p. 389, dates this episode to the early 370s; but the context shows that the question related to the current controversy.

47 Ambrose, *Epist. extra collectionem* 14.4–5.

48 In his retrospective account, Gregory proclaims the 'newfangled heresy' of Apollinarism as the reason for his mission to Constantinople: *De Vita Sua* 607–651; McGuckin, *St. Gregory*, p. 391, astutely notes the pairing with Diodore of Tarsus.

49 Gregory instructs his addressee Cledonius to 'testify to the multitude' on the contents: *Epist*. 101.74. McGuckin, *St. Gregory*, p. 388, suggests that Gregory wrote from Xanxaris: but he says nothing about ill health when justifying (at some length) his recourse to the epistolary format at *Epist*. 102.31–32.

50 Gregory discusses potential defectors at *Epist*. 101.71–72, in terms which imply that cases had already occurred.

Nazianzus)[51] was therefore an act of considerable provocation—the more provocative for the warning to Theodore, in the letter announcing his departure, that if the metropolitan did not 'take care of your church' and provide leadership against the Apollinarists, Gregory would have no alternative but to proclaim publicly to all that 'the church needs a bishop'; Theodore knew, he added ominously, 'what would follow' (*Epist.* 152.7). Gregory had presumably calculated that Theodore would not risk his throwing the see open to all comers.

But this was a dangerous strategy, for Gregory was in effect daring the Cappadocian bishops to allow the church of Nazianzus to be torn apart. And the situation involved an extra complication, which is introduced in an autobiographical poem written as the crisis was developing (*Carm.* 2.1.30). Gregory is the prophet without honour in his homeland, having returned from Constantinople to witness, to his consternation, the church of Nazianzus leaderless and storm-tossed. He had had a plan, to appoint a helmsman whom he trusted, but this project, although a good one, was thwarted by envy. For the presbyters turned out to be 'no good': some were hypocrites who pretended to be favourable, while others opposed him openly.[52] It should be no surprise that some of the clergy at Nazianzus were mutinous, for Gregory must have been a most frustrating bishop. His refusal to resume his duties in 381 was but the latest of a series of gestures of renunciation, dating back to his ordination.[53] One can understand why Gregory was being 'cried out against by the whole clergy'.[54] It might also be relevant that, as Gregory admits in his poem, his preferred deputy was a novice.[55] He had apparently preferred to ignore the rich pool of administrative experience on the presbyters' bench of Nazianzus, those who had actually been managing the church during the previous five years.[56]

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51 Xanxaris is conventionally assigned to the environs of Tyana: F. Hild and M. Restle, *Kappadokien* (*Kappadokia, Charsianon, Sebasteia und Lykandos*) (Wien, 1981), pp. 303–304, following W.M. Ramsay, *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor* (London, 1890), p. 347. This is based on a mistaken identification of Xanxaris with the mansio baths mentioned at *Epist.* 126. There was (and is) a hot spring much nearer Nazianzus, at Ziğa in the Ihlara Valley.

52 *Carm.* 2.1.30, 73–90.

53 The principles guiding Gregory's behaviour have been analysed with sympathetic attention by F. Gautier, *La retraite et le sacerdoce chez Grégoire de Nazianze* (Turnhout, 2003); his activities would still have created awkward consequences for the church of Nazianzus.

54 *Epist.* 138.4. See above, p. 000, for context.

55 *Carm.* 2.1.30, 61–62: Καίπερ νεωστὶ χρημάτων Κράτος δεδεγμένον. For a similar expression, see *Epist.* 139.2, νεωστί τε ἐπιστᾶσαν τοῖς πράγμασι.

56 Resentment would have been the stronger if Gregory's nominee is identified with the presbyter of Iconium who witnessed his will in Constantinople: see Hauser-Meury, *Prosopographie*, p. 55, Cledonius IV.

But in the poem Gregory includes a remarkable allegation against the hostile presbyters. Almost in passing he denounces his 'open enemies' among the clergy as *sarkolatrai*, 'flesh-worshippers' (*Carm.* 2.1.30 87): he uses the term only twice elsewhere, both times in texts related to this same episode, and both times to describe Apollinarists.[57] He does not develop this charge, passing quickly over the people of Nazianzus (like himself, innocent victims of events) to the congenial subject of the 'wise bishops' and their hatred for him. However, the implication must stand that some members of the clergy had associated themselves with the opposition. Inside Nazianzus, the situation might not have looked like a simple confrontation between heresy and orthodoxy.

The poem thus indicates the four-sided standoff that had developed, between Gregory, his presbyters, the neighbouring bishops and the Apollinarists. This must have lasted at least several weeks, probably for months, and possibly for several. The deadlock was broken by Gregory's departure for his rest cure at Xanxaris, which emboldened his opponents to call his bluff, exploiting the temporary presence of some friendly bishops (whether summoned for the purpose or conveniently passing through Gregory could not say) to arrange the consecration of a new bishop (more likely a local presbyter than an intruding Apollinarist) at Nazianzus. This is the situation described in Gregory's letter to Olympius.

Gregory's appeal to the governor should be seen as an attempt to avoid the humiliation of begging his fellow-bishops to rescue him from a self-inflicted embarrassment which could never have happened had he heeded their warnings and stayed at his post. It was a somewhat tentative plea: he did not throw himself on the governor's mercy, and preferred to ignore the Cappadocian bishops than to indulge (as he did in other contexts) in recriminations against them.[58] Gregory prudently left himself room for manoeuvre, in case Olympius declined to intervene. And we cannot know why Olympius chose to respond to a request that he could easily have deflected, or indeed exactly what form the response took. Gregory's celebrity was probably an inducement; but so too was the relative simplicity of the operation. There was no need for Olympius to stake his prestige, or to put his authority to the test: Gregory's reappearance at his cathedral, and his unqualified reassertion of his episcopal role, will itself have sufficed to relegate any pretender to the shadows. But a personal appearance by Olympius would have emphasized Gregory's independence from his colleagues, while offering the governor an easy triumph. Gregory, moreover, had recent experience of the impact which a government escort could give to

57 *Epist.* 101.48; *Carm.* 1.1.10 (*On the Incarnation, Against Apollinaris*), 28.

58 The most vivid such outburst during the crisis is *Carm.* 2.1.30 113–154, 201–216.

a churchman taking possession of his cathedral, and the lustre which a bishop could in turn confer upon his patron; and had recently advertised this.[59] But whatever form it took, Olympius' involvement meant that Gregory was not beholden to the Cappadocian bishops; and the governor not only gained easy credit for solving a crisis, but also inaugurated a partnership with a churchman whose activities continued to interest the emperor himself.[60]

4 Gregory and Nemesius: Calling Cards

The episode, on this reading, thus created the conditions sufficient to explain the other recorded dealings between the two men. With Olympius now established as his guarantor, Gregory could demonstrate that in acting as bishop he was not merely accepting a role which his colleagues had scripted for him; to make this clear he had every reason to be creative in devising further opportunities to do business with the governor. As we have seen, each was able to enhance the other. Perhaps the most striking evidence of the quality of the relationship is the farewell letter which Gregory wrote at the end of Olympius' term, which goes far beyond conventional regrets. Olympius had upgraded the whole province, which is now relegated again to the second division (*Epist.* 154.2). But Gregory laments especially his own plight: who now would tend his old age, and medicate his frailty with honours, and confer the additional honour of acknowledging him as his preferred indulgence broker? (*Epist.* 154.3). But Olympius departs with his glory inscribed upon the hearts of the Cappadocians, his mobile monuments; and their longing shapes prophecies of a second coming for Olympius, at a higher rank (*Epist.* 154.4–5). The bishop's eagerness to convey the unique nature of the case leads him to tropes which have confused his editors.[61] It was, moreover, a regime that Gregory was lamenting, not merely an individual. To Asterius, Olympius' assessor, Gregory gives even fuller vent to his chagrin: he had made a net loss in the relationship, for the pain of parting outweighed the pleasure he had derived from their companionship (*Epist.* 153).[62] Such expressions are not usual, even in an age given

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59 *De Vita Sua* 1360–1391. For discussion, see McLynn, "Moments of Truth," pp. 217–218.

60 Gregory asked at *Epist.* 129.4 that the emperor be reminded of the promise that he had made him.

61 Gallay, *Lettres* 2: 46, n. 1, emends the manuscript reading, στήλαις οὐκ εὐκινήτοις to the banal οὐκ ἀκινήτοις. The comments about 'First Cappadocia' have encouraged scholars to suppose a phantom reunification and re-division of the province: cf. above, n. 41.

62 For Asterius' role, see above, n. 4.

to effusive display. Provinces expected to see a new governor each year, and too vehement a declaration of loyalty to an outgoing *praeses* might complicate dealings with his successor. Libanius' farewells, even to his favourites, are in a more neutral register altogether.[63] Gregory's tone might betray, once again, his inexperience in the art of adjusting from one regime to another.[64]

But Gregory still had an important item of unfinished business when Olympius departed. He was serving as bishop only so that he could retire, definitively, with his dignity intact; the resumption of his responsibilities during the Apollinarist crisis had been part of an exit strategy. Courtship of Theodore of Tyana, the metropolitan bishop of Cappadocia II, was the central plank of this strategy, and there are echoes of Gregory's partnership with Olympius in the working relationship which he developed with Theodore.[65] But Gregory's perceived standing at the governor's headquarters at Tyana would be relevant to this relationship, and this might help explain some otherwise puzzling features in his dealings with Olympius' successor Nemesius. He duly salutes the governor as his 'best of friends', and treats him, as an acknowledged connoisseur of such things, to a display of his eloquence.[66] But where Olympius had listened to a pastor's sermons, Nemesius received a priest's poem; and the three hundred fluent hexameters of *To Nemesius* seem to demand much more from their subject than had Gregory's successive pleas 'to the angry governor'.[67] Gregory commemorates the beginning of the new governor's term, celebrating his formal welcome to the province with verses framed as the equivalent of the speeches, hymns, portraits and bronze statues that would otherwise perpetuate Nemesius' fame.[68] But the panegyrist immediately flouts convention by

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63 Libanius *Epist*. 22, to Licentius; *Epist*. 238, to Italicianus.

64 It might be noted that the collection contains no subsequent correspondence with Olympius or Asterius; nor do the parting letters to either suggest a prospect of any. Gregory seems not to have possessed 'the long reach of the provincial nobility', as delineated by P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, 1992), p. 24.

65 Particularly interesting is *Epist*. 163, where Theodore has appointed Gregory his 'associate' in an inquiry into the validity of an oath sworn by one George of Paspasa; Gallay, ed., *Lettres* 2: 52 declares the date 'uncertain', but the ecclesiastical banter denotes Gregory a bishop.

66 *Carm*. 2.2.7, 306: φίλων ὄχ' ἄριστε Νεμέσσιε.

67 *Carm*. 2.2.7; for discussion see K. Demoen, "Gifts of Friendship that will Remain for Ever: Personae, Addressed Characters and Intended Audience of Gregory Nazianzen's Epistolary Poems," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 47 (1997), pp. 1–11, at 9–10. Cf. above, n. 25, for *Oratio* 17.

68 *Carm*. 2.2.7, 7–18; Slootjes, *The Governor and his Subjects*, p. 121.

dismissing as 'sweet and empty' the literature to which Nemesius had declared himself devoted, and its charm as 'fabricated, similar to whorish faces'.[69] He then wishes himself to a suitably lofty vantage-point, from which to address the whole of mankind.[70] The successive bouts in which he then squares up against 'the vain servants of idols', and delivers effortless knockout blows against stock polytheist positions, draw freely from his previous essays in ridicule.[71] Although commentators have accepted this as a genuine attempt to convert Nemesius (and perhaps a wider constituency of cultivated pagans) from a commitment to the old gods, the global horizons claimed by the poem make it look much more like a calculated exercise in *parrhēsia*.[72] For Nemesius seems not yet even to have met Gregory, having done him honour indirectly:[73] a polite letter from the new governor, expressing admiration for Gregory's culture while neglecting to mention his faith, would have been sufficient to launch the enterprise. Having recognized Gregory's eloquence, the governor (who might have considered himself a Christian)[74] found himself obliged to endure it. The principal intended readership, however, was probably the 'Cappadocian race' which

69 *Carm.* 2.2.7, 28–30; J. Prudhomme, "La critique des poètes profanes dans la poésie de Grégoire de Nazianze," in B. Goldlust and F. Ploton-Nicollet, eds., *Le païen, le chrétien, le profane: Recherches sur l'antiquité tardive* (Paris, 2009), pp. 147–167, at pp. 162–163, identifies Pindaric resonances in the comments on literature.

70 *Carm.* 2.2.7, 85–86: Ἤθελον ἠερίης σκοπιῆς καθύπερθεν ἀερθεὶς, /Βρονταῖον πάντεσσιν ἐπιχθονίοισιν ἀῦσαι. The lines recur in *Carm.* 2.1.32 8–9; there is useful commentary *ad loc.* in Simelidis, *Selected Poems of Gregory of Nazianzus*, pp. 226–227.

71 There is a helpful catalogue in K. Demoen, *Pagan and Biblical Exempla in Gregory Nazianzen: A Study in Rhetoric and Hermeneutics* (Turnhout, 1996), pp. 355–356, which allows cross-reference. There are also direct borrowings from at least one earlier composition: *Carm.* 2.2.7 36–37 repeats verbatim *Carm.* 2.1.1, 305–306.

72 McGuckin, *St. Gregory*, p. 395 n. 143; Van Dam, *Kingdom of Snow*, p. 87. D.A. Sykes, "Reflections on Gregory Nazianzen's *Poemata quae spectant ad alios*," *Studia Patristica* 18.3 (Louvain, 1989), 551–556, detects 'a strong desire to win over a friend to the Christian faith' (p. 553). Cf. K. Demoen, "Gifts of Friendship," pp. 9–10: 'Nemesius should be considered as an actual reader of this ... pamphlet, but certainly not as the only one: the text was probably directed at a public of open-minded pagan intellectuals'.

73 *Carm.* 2.2.7, 315–318 extols the honour that Nemesius has done Gregory 'before seeing with the eyes'.

74 Gregory begins with a critique of the literature that Nemesius loves (*Carm.* 2.2.7, 27); when he moves to speak of pagan belief and practice he begins impersonally (51), and the scorned idolater he then apostrophizes (69: Τύνη δ', ὦ θεοποιὲ, νέων πάτερ οὐρανιώνων) does not seem to be Nemesius. In the next section Gregory addresses 'mortal men' (88); singulars and plurals alternate thereafter. The question merits more detailed investigation. Those second-person passages repeated in (or from) other poems are in these other

Gregory claims for himself and for Christ).[75] This is not a sentimental friendship or the last ineffectual outpourings of a dying swan.[76] Gregory's readers see him once again as the uncompromising mouthpiece of God, receiving favours from the governor and reciprocating with the saving truth.

Gregory's actual dealings with Nemesius, as represented in the letter collection, seem rather pedestrian compared to the bold claims made upon the governor's attention in the poem. The governor is represented by four letters, two of them pleas for clemency, for clients of types familiar from the Olympius dossier, a miscreant relative and an embattled clergyman. The other two, however, are purely personal greetings, one regretting a missed opportunity of detaining Nemesius when he passed near Gregory's home (*Epist.* 201) and the other, at the end of the governor's term, looking forward to more leisurely companionship (*Epist.* 200). Since Gregory had never solicited Olympius' company for its own sake, these notes might seem to suggest greater intimacy, with a more kindred spirit. However, closer reading of the letters shows Gregory making great efforts to explain himself, listing five separate reasons why Nemesius should discharge Valentinianus and six why he should attend to his plea for Theodosius;[77] he also goes to unusual lengths to establish common ground, presenting both suppliants as 'mine and yours' (*Epist.* 198.2, 199.4), deploying considerable ingenuity to establish the connection in Theodosius' case.[78] When he made this latter intercession, moreover, he had apparently still not met Nemesius directly (*Epist.* 199.2); nor was there ever, perhaps, more than a single one brief encounter between the two men (*Epist.* 200.2). Nor again does Gregory's professed concern about becoming 'burdensome' through his incessant correspondence necessarily imply a long record of favours previously granted.[79] The 'tyranny' which Gregory claimed to exercise over Nemesius, in demanding his attention (*Epist.* 201.2), becomes somewhat toothless on inspection.

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cases addressed to faint-hearted Christians: e.g. *Carm.* 1.2.1, 588–590 (=*Carm.* 2.2.7, 33–35), 1.2.2, 494–501, liberally plundered at *Carm.* 2.2.7, 90–99.

75 *Carm.* 2.2.7, 331–333.

76 McGuckin, *St. Gregory*, pp. 395–396.

77 This includes a deliberately casual reference to Plutarch, *Life of Agesilaus* 13 (*Epist.* 198.3–4).

78 Once again the text has been emended unhelpfully. Gallay (Grégoire de Nazianze, *Lettres* 2: 91 and 165, n. 4) offers ὁ ἐμὸς καὶ σός, σκοπὸς μὲν ἐμός, σὸς δὲ ἱκέτης, but all manuscripts give σκοπῷ: Theodosius belonged to Gregory as to a bishop; the poetic form probably betrays the lack of any juridical basis for this.

79 *Epist.* 199.1. He expresses a similar concern to his brother Caesarius, *Epist.* 20.6, in a context which indicates that 'frequent' letters might simply mean more than one.

The letters and the poem should be considered in conjunction. Both reflect, in different ways, Gregory's need to live up to the expectations which he had created in developing his privileged channel to Olympius. By advertizing himself as a patron whose voice counted at the governor's tribunal, Gregory had opened a door to potential clients which he could not easily shut, least of all while he was still managing the delicate business of his retirement, and the installation of his cousin Eulalius in his place, was still pending. By the end of Nemesius' term the operation had been completed, but even then perceptions of Gregory's position still counted for much.[80] It therefore still mattered to Gregory to be able to advertize the governor's promise to attend a tutorial on Christian doctrine; such an advertizement would signify particularly to those among whom the admonitory poem had circulated.

The exchanges with Nemesius, on this reading, are as much driven as were those with Olympius by Gregory's own developing situation. On the other hand, this might make the letter collection more representative of Gregory's actual dealings with provincial governors than has been supposed. It might be suggested that Olympius really was unusual in receiving so many requests; that there really was a reduction in such traffic when Nemesius took over. Nor, perhaps, had Gregory troubled previous governors at Tyana with such pleas.[81] Provincial bishops (even old Athenians, confident exponents of *paideia*)[82] did not attempt lightly to impose themselves on their governors. We have become accustomed to envisioning a late antique world where 'Ceremony insensibly worked the ideals of *paideia* into the texture of government';[83] but closer attention to practice might throw into sharper relief the constraints upon the political uses of literary culture, the risks of failure which enhanced the gratification of occasional success. Gregory's case seems to illustrate very well how much had to happen before a provincial notable could do business comfortably with his governors.

80 Gregory would urge Gregory of Nyssa, at *Epist.* 182.3, to ignore rumours that the consecration of his successor had been undertaken against his will; in the same letter he insists upon the legitimacy of these proceedings (*Epist.* 182.4). Also relevant are the dealings with the neighbouring landowner Vitalianus, which are to be dated to this period: see N.B. McLynn, "The Other Olympias: Gregory Nazianzen and the Family of Vitalianus," *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentums* 2 (1998), pp. 227–246.

81 It is worth noting in this respect that there is no correspondence concerning the elder Nicobulus with any of Olympius' predecessors, although he will have served on their staff—and his affairs were clearly of interest to Gregory when compiling the collection.

82 Gregory plays the Athenian card to Nemesius, in language that suggests that the latter had been schooled elsewhere: *Carm.* 2.2.7, 43–44.

83 Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, p. 56.

CHAPTER 5

Lobbying through Literature: Libanius, *For the Teachers* (*Oration* 31)

*Lieve Van Hoof**

1 Introduction

A key component of Greek culture, rhetoric was a crucial asset in elite self-definition and recognition under the early Empire: not only could rhetoric still be useful, it was also an important way of distinguishing oneself. As a marker of elite identity, rhetoric could lead to social promotion.[1] In Late Antiquity, this relation between rhetorical ability and social status, between culture and power is often thought to have dwindled, or even to have completely disappeared: sophists are assumed to have withdrawn into their schools and to have lost their influence to bishops, specialists in law or shorthand, and military men.[2]

Libanius' Oration 31, *For the Teachers*, at first sight seems to confirm this image of decline. In this speech, Libanius asks for the financial situation of his teaching assistants to be improved through the usufruct of a civic estate. A.F. Norman sees this speech "as being the first overt admission in his extant works of Libanius' recognition that all was not well in the circumstances of

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1 T. Schmitz, *Bildung und Macht: Zur sozialen und politischen Funktion der zweiten Sophistik in der griechischen Welt der Kaiserzeit* (München, 1997); T. Whitmarsh, *The Second Sophistic* (Oxford, 2005).

2 E.g. S. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, A.D. 50–250* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 3–6; M. Hose, "Die Krise der Rhetoren: Über den Bedeutungsverlust der institutionellen Rhetorik im 4. Jahrhundert und die Reaktion ihrer Vertreter," in C. Neumeister and W. Raeck, eds., *Rede und Redner: Bewertung und Darstellung in den antiken Kulturen. Kolloquium Frankfurt a.M., 14.–16. Oktober 1998* (Frankfurt, 2000), pp. 289–299; A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 40; A. Quiroga Puertas, "From *Sophistopolis* to *Episcopolis*: The Case for a Third Sophistic," *Journal for Late Antique Religion and Culture* 1 (2007), 31–42; P.-L. Malosse and B. Schouler, "Qu'est-ce que la troisième sophistique?," *Lalies* 29 (2009), 161–224, esp. pp. 163–164.

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his profession. It is a far cry from the heady excitement which marks his settlement in Antioch (*Oration* 1.86 ff.), or from the idealized picture of Antioch as a centre of the purest Hellenic culture, so characteristic of the *Antiochikos* five years before. Harsh reality has now obtruded itself".[3] In Norman's view, then, *Oration* 31 faithfully describes a negative reality, whereas *Orations* 1 and 11, under the influence of emotion[4] and rhetoric respectively, present an embellished ideal.

Yet as a symbouleutic speech, *Oration* 31 is also a piece of rhetoric, albeit of a different rhetorical genre than the apologetic *Oration* 1 or the panegyric *Oration* 11. Thus far, however, scholars have merely quarried the text for information on Libanius' school without studying the text's rhetorical set-up.[5] In this chapter, I therefore present a twofold rhetorical analysis of Libanius' *Oration* 31. After an introduction to the speech in Section Two, Section Three examines how Libanius analyzes the relationship between literature and society in his speech. Section Four, on the other hand, analyzes how he uses rhetoric in order to forge closer ties between both. Both sections will combine close reading with sociological concepts in order to further our understanding of the argument and working of this understudied text, and to clarify what it can (and cannot) teach us on the relation between literature and society in the fourth century A.D.

2 Rhetoric between Poverty and Wealth

Oration 31 is a typical symbouleutic speech: it advises the city councilors of Antioch on a political decision. Consisting of a prooemium (§§1–7), a narration (§§8–14), a proposal (§§15–18), a series of refutations (§§19–41), and a peroration (§§42–48), it was delivered in the city council, probably in 361.[6] After

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3 A.F. Norman, *Antioch as a Centre of Hellenic Culture as Observed by Libanius* (Liverpool, 2001), p. 68.

4 It should be stressed, however, that *Oration* 1.86 was written more than ten years after the facts, and presents a carefully crafted self-image suited for the time of writing rather than an immediate emotional reaction to the events. Cf. L. Van Hoof, "Libanius' life and *Life*," in L. Van Hoof, ed., *Libanius: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge, 2014).

5 For a survey of studies that refer to *Oration* 31, see A.F. Norman, *Antioch*, p. 69. Rather than introducing them here, I shall refer to these studies where they are relevant to my argument.

6 For the dating of *Oration* 31, see A.F. Norman, *Antioch*, pp. 67–68, with references to earlier discussions.

a period of study in Athens and an initial career as a sophist in Constantinople and Nicomedia, Libanius (314–393) had returned to his home city of Antioch in 353/4. At first, he had taught as a private teacher in his own house, later in a more central location near the city square. Soon, however, he had become the city's official sophist and transferred to the city hall.[7] His predecessor in that position, Zenobius, had received a municipal salary and enjoyed the usufruct of a civic estate as a reward. As Robert Kaster has shown, Libanius, on the contrary, probably never received any payment from the city of Antioch as its official sophist.[8] Instead, the salary of Zenobius was payed out to Libanius' four teaching assistants, probably Uranius, Gaudentius, Herodianus, and Calliopius/Cleobulus.[9] Although being (mere) assistants, these people received the municipal salary usually paid out to the city's sophist. With *Oration* 31, Libanius asks for more: he wishes the city council to give his assistants the usufruct of a civic estate on top of their salary. This would mean that the city council paid Libanius' four assistants together as much as it paid Libanius' predecessor.

At first sight, Libanius' plea in *Oration* 31 may seem rather outrageous: given that we know of no other teaching assistants in Antioch or elsewhere who received a municipal salary, Libanius' assistants seem to have been already exceptionally fortunate in receiving it.[10] Yet according to Libanius, this did not suffice for his assistants to live a decent life: some of them cannot buy a house

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7 Cf. J. Wintjes, *Das Leben des Libanius* (Rahden, 2005), p. 107 with primary references to *Oration* 1, and R. Cribiore, *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch* (Princeton, 2007), p. 30. The location of the city sophist in the city hall (βουλευτήριον) may serve as a warning against the idea of a sophistic withdrawal from society in late Antiquity.

8 R. Kaster, "The Salaries of Libanius," *Chiron* 13 (1983), 37–59, esp. pp. 54–58. The argument is based on *Oration* 31, where Libanius states that he is 'neither in need of receiving, nor capable of giving' (§3); where he talks about the reception of municipal payment in the third person (§19); and where he counterfactually states that nobody would have refused him the usufruct of municipal land had he asked for it upon his return to Antioch (§46). Libanius did, however, continue to enjoy an imperial salary almost uninterruptedly (cf. R. Kaster, "Salaries," pp. 50–53), hailed from a landed, curial family, and normally would not need to pay his teaching assistants, as they were being paid by the city.

9 For the assistants referred to in *Oration* 31, and the discussion concerning the identity of the fourth, see P. Wolf, *Vom Schulwesen der Spätantike: Studien zu Libanius* (Baden Baden, 1952), pp. 66–75 and R. Cribiore, *The School of Libanius*, pp. 33–37.

10 For references to teaching assistants and their activities in late antiquity, see P. Wolf, *Schulwesen*, p. 60. These assistants were of course being paid, but the sources nowhere specify that they received an official salary—an honour which for example Ausonius in his Poem 22 *To Victorius, Assistant Teacher or Usher* (*Victorio subdoctori sive proscholo*), would probably not have failed to mention.

of their own, those who can struggle to pay back their mortgage, none of them can afford more than a few slaves, and keeping up their families sometimes becomes so difficult as to make them sell their wives' jewellery. In addition, he suggests, they need to buy their bread on tick (§§11–13). The vivid evocation of the latter has led some readers to believe that Libanius' assistants experience real dearth. And indeed, Libanius' description of the situation as 'the present plight' (ἐν τοῖς παροῦσι κακοῖς, §7) is mirrored in the quote from Norman in the introduction above ('harsh reality'). If true, such dearth would make Libanius' plea entirely justified. Upon closer inspection, however, the situation turns out to have been more complex. For the largest part, Libanius' depiction—not owning a house or having a mortgage, having but few slaves, or getting indebted to the point of having to sell some jewellery—suggests not so much structural poverty, as a *decline* in wealth and luxury:[11] 'from being great <the rewards> become small', as Libanius puts it (§26). His assistants had apparently enjoyed quite some wealth, witness the purchase of jewellery or houses, and were expecting to be able to make major investments in the future, as shown by the hope to buy a house or the expectation to be able to pay back a mortgage. The financial situation of Libanius' assistants was, in other words, not as bad as the speech has made some readers believe. Whilst it cannot be excluded that some or all of his assistants may, at some point, have bought their bread on tick, Libanius' vivid evocation of this practice should therefore be seen as a rhetorical exaggeration: it is an exaggeration in that it generalizes what is unlikely to have been more than sporadic practice; and it is rhetoric—notwithstanding Libanius' explicit request to be believed (μοι μηδεὶς ἀπιστείτω)—not only in that it elicits the audience's compassion by emphasizing the difficulty of the assistants' situation,[12] but also in that it seems devised precisely to promote the specific solution Libanius proposes. In order to see this, it will be useful to have a closer look at the passage where Libanius describes his assistants' problems at the bakery:

11 Apart from the elite, many people in antiquity, especially in cities, seem to have lived in rented accommodation (e.g. Juvenal 3.190–222, Plutarch, *Life of Crassus* 2), and the fact that these assistants could take up (too much) credit suggests that they were not poor. For the (sub-)elite status of small borrowers in the Greek world, cf. H.-G. Ingenkamp, "Plutarchs Schrift gegen das Borgen: Adressaten, Lehrziele und Genos," in G. Roskam and L. Van der Stockt, eds., *Virtues for the People: Aspects of Plutarchan Ethics* (Louvain, 2011), pp. 223–236 on Plutarch's *That One Ought Not to Borrow*.

12 On the importance, for rhetoric, of eliciting the audience's emotions, see Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 2.2–11, 1378a–1388b.

> Their conversation is with bakers, and not bakers who have borrowed their corn and from whom they are wanting payment for it, but those to whom they themselves are in debt for corn, whom they are always promising to pay and always asking for a further advance. (*Oration* 31.12)

As Libanius presents it, his assistants cannot pay the baker for the corn used to make their bread. They therefore buy their bread on tick, and thus become endebted to the bakers. Other people, on the other hand, sell corn to the baker, who, if he does not get enough money from selling bread to people such as Libanius' assistants, cannot pay and thus becomes indebted to them.[13] What separates both groups of people, those who have to pay for their bread and those who receive payment for their corn, is the possession of land. And indeed, the solution Libanius proposes in *Oration* 31 is for his assistants to be given the usufruct of a piece of municipal land. If the councilors follow this proposal, the relation between the teachers and the bakers will be reversed, and the teachers will in effect be in a situation comparable to that of the landed gentry. Rather than offering proof of any dearth experienced by Libanius' teaching assistants, then, the reference to their endebtedness to the bakers serves to elicit the council's sympathy as well as to prepare them for the proposed solution.

As this brief introduction has made clear, Libanius' assistants seem to have been quite affluent at some point. Whilst still reeling from that affluency, their situation changed, to a greater or lesser extent, in the period leading up to *Oration* 31. In that *Oration*, Libanius asks the city council to award another exceptional reward to his assistants, an award that would place them on the same level as the city's landed gentry. The fact that Libanius does not demand the restoration of his assistants' salary, but the usufruct of a civic estate on top of if, makes it clear that the decline in wealth experienced by his assistants was not due to any cut in their municipal salary.[14] Indeed, Libanius counts with the objection that his assistants already receive a salary every year (and therefore are in no need of the usufruct of a civic estate, especially as this would place

13 A.F. Norman, *Antioch*, p. 73, n. 11 describes the normal procedure for landed people to get their bread: the baker baked bread from people's corn, received some corn as a payment for this service, and bought the remaining corn to make bread for those people who did not have corn of their own and who therefore paid cash for both the contents and making of their bread.

14 *Pace* A.F. Norman, *Antioch*, p. 66, who links the financial problems of Libanius' assistants to the hostility of 'officials and councillors' against Libanius as their head of school, thus suggesting a cut in municipal payments. Norman's interpretation may be influenced by the problems faced by Libanius himself concerning his salary, yet those problems concerned an imperial rather than municipal salary. Cf. R. Kaster, "Salaries," pp. 50–53.

them jointly on the same level as Zenobius, who was their superior in rank, §§11, 19, 21). Although he contends that the salary is not always paid punctually or spontaneously, this is clearly not the point (ἀλλ᾽ ἐῶ τοῦτο, §20). So if not a cut in his assistants' official salary, what did cause their situation to change dramatically enough for Libanius to take the floor with *Oration* 31?

3 Libanius' Analysis

The basic principle underlying Libanius' analysis of his assistants' situation in *Oration* 31 is to be found around the middle of the speech, in paragraph 26:

> All arts that are favoured (τιμῶνται) by the emperors lead their students to influence (δύναμιν) and simultaneously bring fortune (εὐδαιμονίαν) to their teachers: the services are held to be great, and the rewards (ὁ μισθός) are great. However, when any profession, even though intrinsically good (χρηστὸν ... τῇ φύσει), is despised (καταφρονηθῇ) by the ruling emperor, it loses its prestige (δόξαν); and if the prestige vanishes, the rewards (ὁ μισθός) vanish along with it, or rather, if they be not entirely lost, from being great they become small.

In this passage, Libanius draws a link between culture, esteem, power, and financial reward: if the emperor appreciates rhetoric, teachers of oratory wield influence and earn good money. Attention is thus drawn to what Keith Hopkins has called the principle of status congruence between cultural, symbolic, and economic capital:[15] people who possess cultural capital usually also hold political and financial power, and *vice versa*. Libanius himself as it were embodies this principle: stemming from an influential, land-owning family, he enjoyed an outstanding education that contributed to the social esteem of himself and his family. In *Oration* 31, this esteem is, in turn, exploited in order to influence a political decision of the Antiochene city council in favour of his rhetorical school. Libanius' cultural, symbolic, and economic capital thus reinforce one another.

If the congruence between cultural, symbolic, and economic capital characterizes a society's elite, the lack of congruence often forms the basis for social mobility. Thus Libanius tells us in *Oration* 31 that his assistants decided to come to work in his school because Antioch 'welcomed any pauper who possessed nothing but intellectual ability. These people you promptly displayed, some as

15 K. Hopkins, "Elite Mobility in the Roman Empire," *Past & Present* 32 (1965), 12–26, p. 14.

owners of broad and fertile acres, others of silver and gold and all else that usually is a mark of wealth' (*Oration* 31.9).[16] In Antioch, it was thus possible to cash in money for rhetoric, that is, to convert cultural capital into economic capital. Thus Libanius' assistants, even if they did not come from a rich background, were able to make a (small) fortune for themselves by teaching in Antioch:[17] they acquired land, they took up credit to buy a house, or, in a typical example of conspicuous vicarious consumption[18] highlighted as such by Libanius (ἃ μέρη πλούτου νενόμισται, §9), they bought jewellery for their wives.

Whilst the city's handworkers seem to have thought that this was still the case at the time of *Oration* 31—the text refers to the fact that 'some of the tradesmen sitting at their workshop doors gossip about the teachers' high incomes' (§25)—Libanius contends that the situation has changed dramatically: teachers of rhetoric are now on the brink of poverty. According to the passage quoted, this change in fortune is due to the fact that rhetoric no longer leads to power as the ruling emperor despises it. The link between rhetoric on the one hand, and symbolic, political, and financial capital on the other, has, in other words, been losened. In the previous section, it was already pointed out that the described poverty of Libanius' assistants should be taken with a pinch of salt. Likewise, we should be careful in taking at face value Libanius' description of the lack in social power of, and in imperial esteem for, rhetoric. Apart from the fact that the opposition of a glorious past to a miserable present presents a clear instance of the topos of the *laudatio temporis acti* (esp. §§12 and 25), it is striking that *Oration* 31 nowhere points to any imperial action against rhetoric. *E silentio*, this confirms Constantius' esteem for Greek rhetoric, highlighted in recent scholarship.[19] As opposed to what *Oration* 31 might

16 Likewise in §25, Libanius talks about 'those who made a fortune out of school-teaching' and about 'the idea of the profession as a prime means of making money'. At least in the minds of the city's handworkers, whose ideas about his teaching assistants Libanius describes in §25, economic promotion through rhetoric was still possible at the time of the publication of *Oration* 31.

17 Several of Libanius' assistants would, in fact, become wealthy enough to be called to the *curia*. Cf. A.F. Norman, *Antioch*, pp. 145–148.

18 For these terms, and their importance especially for social upstarts, see T. Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York, 1998 = 1899), pp. 68–101.

19 E.g. H. Schlange-Schöningen, *Kaisertum und Bildungswesen im spätantiken Konstantinopel* (Stuttgart, 1995), pp. 15–18; E.-M. Seiler, *Konstantios II. bei Libanios: Eine kritische Untersuchung des überlieferten Herrscherbildes* (Frankfurt, 1998), esp. pp. 171–179; N. Henck, "Constantius' *Paideia*, Intellectual Milieu and Promotion of the Liberal Arts," *PCPS* 47 (2001), 172–187; S. Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church: Emperor Julian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Vision of Rome* (Berkeley, 2012), esp. p. 379 and n. 4; L. Van Hoof, "Performing Paideia. Greek Culture as an Instrument for Social Promotion in the Fourth

make one believe (§27), then, no active campaign was set up against rhetoric. Yet the emperor now (also) promoted people trained in shorthand writing—a fact which Libanius presents as wholly new:[20]

> I would like to enquire whether anyone ever expected to see these teachers of shorthand making a fortune from their trade or doing better than cobblers or carpenters. No one, of course. Yet for all that, they are making a fortune, dining and wining and putting on airs. What need to wonder, then, that my teachers' status has declined, as theirs has been undeservedly raised? (*Oration* 31.33)

This passage suggests a link between the downfall of rhetoric and the rise of shorthand.[21] Rhetoric could thus no longer lay claim to being the only, or a uniquely privileged, way to power: at least in some cases shorthand henceforth shared in that privilege.[22] What rhetoric faced, in other words, was not so much a status loss in absolute terms, but a relative decline in a society which Libanius clearly perceived as a zero-sum game.

This lack of privileged status made itself felt to Libanius' school financially in two ways. First, social upstarts were less likely to consider a rhetorical education useful in order to be accepted into the elite, especially since a technical training in shorthand lasted much shorter, and was therefore much cheaper, than a formative education in rhetoric (§28). These people, in other words, no longer sought to make their rhetorical abilities congruent with their symbolic,

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Century A.D.," *Classical Quarterly* 63, pp. 387–406, esp. pp. 394–399. Libanius himself (§6) makes it clear, however, that most councillors still thought a rhetorical education worthwhile for their children.

20 Cf. R. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1988), pp. 47–48, and H.C. Teitler, *Notarii and Exceptores: An Inquiry into Role and Significance of Shorthand Writers in the Imperial and Ecclesiastical Bureaucracy of the Roman Empire* (*From the Early Principate to 450 A.D.*) (Amsterdam, 1985), pp. 54–72, who rightly nuances, however, the low social origins of fourth-century shorthand writers and locating the status rise of their profession to an earlier period (esp. pp. 64–68). P. Heather, "New Men for New Constantines? Creating and Imperial Elite in the Eastern Mediterranean," in P. Magdalino, ed., *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th Centuries* (London, 1994), p. 17 also stresses Constantius' promotion of 'old' as well as 'new men'.

21 See also §28.

22 In this respect, P. Garnsey, "Roman Patronage," in S. McGill, C. Sogno and E.J Watts, eds., *From the Tetrarchs to the Theodosians* (Yale Classical Studies) 34 (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 33–54 (at p. 51) speaks of 'rival channels of influence'.

financial, or political power.[23] This meant fewer students, and thus *fewer* fees, for rhetorical schools. Second, well-established families whose rhetorical education was congruent with their political and financial power faced competition from these upstarts (§29). In the zero-sum game of influence and power, they were thus bound to lose out. For rhetorical schools, this meant *smaller* fees and less frequent gifts. As fees and gifts were a crucial source of income for late antique rhetorical schools,[24] this double reduction of fees, in number and in amount, may have had dramatic consequences. Rather than any supposed reduction in the city's payments, then, it must have been this dwindling in fees that brought Libanius' teaching assistants into financial trouble: if the fees they used to receive on top of their part of the municipal salary allowed them to move upwards in society, the decrease in emoluments they were experiencing at the time of *Oration* 31 no longer did so, and even risked to bring them down again.

The financial problems facing his assistants as a result of these evolutions form the starting point and focus of Libanius' speech. Yet as Libanius' analysis shows, financial setbacks are, in fact, a symptom rather than the cause of the problem: whilst his assistants' loss of income is arguably the most tangible result of the situation, the root of the problem is rhetoric's (relative) loss in status. In order to improve their situation, however, Libanius again focuses on finances rather than on esteem. Esteem, of course, cannot be controlled as easily as money. Yet by improving his assistants' finances, Libanius may well have hoped to enhance rhetoric's esteem as well: thanks to the *Kongruenzprinzip* between different forms of capital, those who earn more money and can therefore afford a more luxurious lifestyle are often held in more respect. Failing this, a financial improvement will at least save rhetoric from becoming even more despised because of the financial needs of its practitioners, for example in the eyes of bakers (§12) or handworkers (§25).

The final element to be examined in this section is the specific solution Libanius proposes. Granted that he proceeds by healing the symptom rather than tackling the cause of the problem directly, why does he propose that his assistants be granted the usufruct of *a civic estate*? After all, as we have seen,

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23 The extent of this evolution should not be exaggerated, though: not only does Libanius explicitly point out that he still has numerous students (§30), but as M.R. Salzman, "Elite Realities and Mentalités: The Making of a Western Christian Aristocracy," *Arethusa* 33 (2000), 353–354 has shown, new elites also did their best to acquire cultural capital as well.

24 For the importance of fees in late antique schools of rhetoric, see R. Cribiore, *The School of Libanius*, pp. 183–191; for their payment in cash, see J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1972), p. 84 and nn. 6 and 7.

the financial setback of his assistants was probably not due to any reduction in official payments, but to a decrease in (private) fees and gifts. Why, then, does Libanius address the city council rather than his students' parents, and why does he ask for land instead of money? As far as the first question is concerned, two elements can be pointed out. First, it was, of course, far more practical to address the city council as a whole than to convince each and every student's parents individually. As we shall see in the next section, *publicly* addressing the councillors, some of whom are likely to have had their sons studying with Libanius (§6), may have helped Libanius to carry the day. Second, an increase in official payment was the safest way of counteracting possible downturns once and for all: with extra support from the city, Libanius' assistants would, in the future, be able to live a decent life even if their income from private sources would, for some reason or other, further (or again) dwindle. This brings us to the second question: why does Libanius ask the city council for the usufruct of land rather than for more money? In line with what has just been said, it can be argued that land offers a more secure source of income than money: not only is money subject to inflation,[25] it also needs to be acquired from 'the governors, their staff, the city treasurer and any swaggering jackanapes' (§19).[26] Land, on the contrary, tends to keep its value, and the produce can be converted into money directly.[27] Asking for the usufruct of land rather than for extra money further had the advantage of having a precedent in the person of Zenobius. In this way, Libanius could emphasize that he was not asking for his assistants to earn more money than Zenobius, but for them to enjoy the usufruct of land on top of money just like he had done (§20). At the same time, leasing land would, in all probability, be easier for the city than granting extra money: in times of strict imperial control over municipal expenditure, it was not always easy for city councils to find extra money, whereas the lease of civic estates remained possible even after the confiscations of Constantine and Constantius.[28] Last but not least, whereas an increase in salary would have merely enhanced his assistants' financial situation, the award of land was likely to contribute to

25 Whilst Libanius nowhere refers to monetary inflation, not even where this would suit his argument, contemporary Egypt saw rampant inflation. Cf. J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch*, p. 86.

26 For the intervention of officials in the payment of civic salaries in cash, see J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch*, p. 152.

27 It should be noted, however, that the grant of a piece of municipal land could always be revoked, as Libanius explicitly states in §16 (ἀφελέσθαι). 'Path dependency' implies, though, that it would be more difficult to undo the grant once it had been approved.

28 Cf. J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch*, pp. 151–153 for both difficulties and opportunities concerning municipal expenses.

their symbolic capital directly. Indeed, having land at one's disposal was a clear marker of status that set the landed gentry and the city councilors apart from the rest of the population. By asking for his assistants to be awarded a similar privilege, Libanius may well have hoped not just to give financial leeway, but also to convey prestige onto them:

> The larger estates must belong to you (city councilors), for you spend your money and contribute to the community, and are subjected to great expenditure, partly of annual regularity, partly recently instituted. But from these smaller estates grant the rhetors a respite and raise their morale (τὰς ψυχὰς … ὑψηλάς), and regard them as more deserving than those who perform no civic services (τῶν οὐ λειτουργούντων), for if you were to say that they performed liturgies (λειτουργεῖν), you would not perhaps be wide of the mark. (*Oration* 31.17)

Although Libanius takes care to give his target audience, the city councilors, pride of place, his teaching assistants, he suggests, come only second. By comparing the services they perform by teaching to the liturgies undertaken by the councilors, Libanius in other words places his assistants above all other Antiochenes, and in particular above rich citizens to whom civic estates were leased although they did not contribute to civic liturgies. As was the case with Zenobius, the grant of the usufruct of a piece of land will allow Libanius' assistants to live a gentleman's life (ὑπὲρ τοῦ τρέφεσθαι *πρεπόντως ἐλευθέρῳ* τό χωρίον προσελάμβανεν, §22).

As this section has shown, then, a concern for the social status of rhetoric lies at the heart of Libanius' analysis in *Oration* 31: although finances form the focus of the description of his assistants' difficulties as well as of the solution he proposes, status has turned out to be not only the essence of the problem, but also the ultimate goal of Libanius' remedy. Rather than saving his assistants from any real dearth, then, the purpose of Libanius' speech is to assure their social status.

4 Analyzing Libanius

> And what need is there,' comes the objection, 'for a set speech, and a meeting of the council, and the waste of a day when you could just approach the councillors individually, have a few brief words with them and achieve the same result? (*Oration* 31.36)

With *Oration* 31, Libanius tries to influence a decision of the city council to his (assistants') advantage. As such, it is a clear instance of lobbying. In modern analyses of lobbying, a distinction is made between direct and indirect lobbying. In direct lobbying, one tries to convince the decision-maker to be influenced by addressing him orally or in writing. Indirect lobbying, on the other hand, exerts pressure over decision-makers for example through mass demonstrations, petitions, or media releases. In *Oration* 31, Libanius makes use of both forms of lobbying. If direct lobbying lies at the core of most ancient symbouleutic speeches, Libanius' *Oration* 31 distinguishes itself through its explicit use of indirect lobbying too—as will become clear in Libanius' answer to the question quoted at the beginning of this section.

As far as direct lobbying is concerned, *Oration* 31, which repeatedly addresses the city councilors, not only offers the rational argumentation proceeding from prooemium over narration, proposal, and refutation to peroration which was set out above, but also heavily plays on the councilors' sense of honour. First of all, Libanius points out that all of the councilors have themselves enjoyed a rhetorical education, and therefore ought to support rhetoric (πάντες ἔχετε τοῦ βοηθεῖν λόγοις ἀνάγκην αὐτὸ τὸ κεκτῆσθαι λόγους, §47). Second, he suggests that those who would not want to finance rhetoric would show themselves to be 'miserly, niggardly and parsimonious' (φιλάργυρος, γλίσχρος, φιλοχρήματος, §41), as well as 'insensitive, arrogant and cantankerous' (ἀγνώμων, θρασὺς καὶ βδελυρός, §46). Next, he states that since the councilors must 'concern themselves with everything that makes a city famous and prosperous', they ought to stand up for rhetoric, which 'has advanced our city to its present station'.[29] More particularly, rhetoric allowed Antioch 'to overcome the irrational impulses of governors by dint of rational argument' (§7). If the councilors wish to keep their power *vis à vis* the imperial governors, Libanius suggests, they should continue to sponsor rhetoric. Finally, Libanius plays out the councilors' pride in Antioch's good name. On the one hand, he stresses the importanc of a good name for the city in absolute terms: surely, the councilors wouldn't want people in other cities to think that Antioch does not cultivate one of its tutelary deities, the Muse Calliope (§40). On the other hand, he plays out the rivalry between Antioch and other cities: 'It is intolerable and unpardonable for the people of Antioch to have less regard for learning than those of Caesarea, who by lavish promises induced one of your tachers to pick a lesser city in preference to the greater; and now he possesses what they promised' (§43). Thus if

29 Note again the status congruence between cultural, symbolic, and financial capital implied in this sentence.

the councilors wish to conserve Antioch's pride of place, they should promote rhetoric. Taken together, then, these arguments of honour support Libanius' explicit argumentation: whereas the explicit arguments shows why Libanius thinks the councilors should support rhetoric, the arguments of honour prove that the city and the councilors themselves have everything to gain by his proposal.

Apart from trying to convince the councilors directly, Libanius also exploits the possibilities of indirect lobbying in this speech. Two passages in particular are very explicit about this. The first offers the answer to the question quoted at the beginning of this section. As that question indicates, councilors would expect to be lobbied, but they expected it in what could be called its 'etymological' sense: the normal practice would have been for Libanius to address a number of councilors privately, in the 'lobby', as it were, of the city council. Libanius explains why he opted for a public speech instead:

> I anticipated that the very numbers of those who will be assembled and the fact that a crowd of all manner of persons will attend the recital would help to encourage you no less than the actual speaker, for generosity, if unobserved, deters prospective donors, and if there is none to know of it, one prefers not to give what one would have spent had there been many witnesses of it. When you reflect that, if you reject any advice you listen to before a packed audience, you will have thousands to complain about you, whereas, if you give way and accept it, you will have as many to commend it, fearful of the first and desirous of the other, you decide upon the course which will show you in the better light (§39).

The presence of the audience, Libanius explains, will encourage the councilors to heed his advice. Whilst this passage clearly puts pressure on the council, it also suggests to the audience how it should behave: if the councilors support Libanius' proposal, they should commend them for it; if not, they should complain. This brings us to Libanius' second reference to indirect lobbying:

> I know how to sing the praises of those who reach a right decision and how to write appropriately about those who oppose it, so choose the means whereby you may both confer advantage upon the city and delight the gods of learning (§48).

In this final sentence of his speech, Libanius uses a stick and carrot approach: if the councilors do not follow his advice, he will use his rhetorical abilities to blemish them; if they do, he will sing their praises. This time, he suggests, he

has held a speech trying to convince them, thus largely making use of direct lobbying. Yet if this would turn out not to suffice, he will not hesitate, so he threatens, to stir up people's minds against the city councilors. He will not hesitate, in other words, to lobby fully indirectly and mobilize the public.

That Libanius could hope to make a successful lobbyist derives from his special relationship with both the subjects and the addressees of his oration. Indeed, whilst first-hand knowledge of his assistants' situation, highlighted in §32, made him well-placed to inform the city councilors, his familiarity with the city council not only allowed him to present himself as a defender of the council against more severe critics (§3),[30] but also enabled him to address the most prominent councilors with personalized arguments (§47, addressing Eubulus, Spectatus, Hilarius, Letoius, Arsenius, and the syriarch). Libanius can, in other words, present himself as 'the benefactor both of those whom I advise and of those on whose behalf I have come forward' (§5). At the same time, Libanius probably also had strong personal stakes in the issue at hand. On the one hand, he may have found himself in a situation that was quite similar to that of his assistants: from his letters, we know that his imperial salary was reduced between 360 and 362 A.D.[31] Although—except for a possible implicit reference to his own financial setbacks in §3—Libanius does not refer to his own financial troubles in *Oration* 31, they may well have influenced his presentation of imperial dislike for rhetoric. For as we have seen, the emperor was, after all, only indirectly responsible for the deterioration of the financial situation of Libanius' assistants. On the other hand, Libanius had a strong personal interest in the outcome of his plea. Should the councilors disagree with him, this would not only imply the consolidation of a financial loss for his assistants, but also offer proof of the fact that rhetoric as practised (and taught) by Libanius no longer enjoyed social influence. Should he win, conversely, the gain would concern not only the finances of his assistants but also the esteem and influence of rhetoric. We have no information on the outcome of the council's deliberation; but apart from the fact that it is highly unlikely

30 These more severe accusors may well have been invented by Libanius in order to make himself look more moderate (cf. εἴ τινες).

31 *Epist.* 28 and 740. See R. Kaster, "Salaries," pp. 50–53. Nevertheless, it should be taken into account that Libanius, hailing from a well-to-do curial family, would still have been much better off than his assistants. As a member of the curial class, he also takes care not to give the impression of seeking financial gain. In *Oration* 31, one can point out the negative remarks about attaching importance to finances (§§21 and 41), the reference to εὐδαιμονία, 'happiness' rather than money (§26), and the extensive justification of why he speaks up for his own assistants but not for those of other teachers (§§34–35); more generally, see R. Cribiore, *The School of Libanius*, pp. 183–191.

that Libanius would have risked so much had he not been sure of achieving his aim, the transmission of the oration in the corpus of Libanius' speeches suggests a positive result.

5 Conclusion

What can we learn concerning the social position of literature in the fourth century from this two-fold analysis of Libanius' *Oration* 31? On the one hand, our analysis has shown that the threat to rhetoric was probably much less severe than the text suggests at first sight: Libanius' assistants faced a relative decline in wealth rather than real poverty; there was no active campaign against rhetoric; and Libanius himself could reasonably expect to convince the city council through a speech. What is more, if successful, *Oration* 31 would bring Libanius' assistants in a situation comparable to that of the landed gentry, second only to the city councilors. On the other hand, the very fact that all of this needed to be *argued*, suggests that this was no longer self-evident. Although Libanius could assume that Antioch's city councilors would want their children to get a rhetorical education (§6) and that they saw rhetoric as an honourable education (§§26 and 28), it is clear from the text that rhetoric no longer was the unique pathway to influence, nor the *conditio sine qua non* for a position in imperial administration. More than before, rhetoric needed to justify itself. The result of this need can be seen in *Oration* 31: Libanius adapts rhetoric to defend rhetoric's social position. As ever, rhetoric thus reinvented itself in order to meet the specific needs of fourth-century society.

CHAPTER 6

Texts, Teachers and Pupils in the Writings of Gregory of Nyssa

Morwenna Ludlow

1 Introduction[1]

While Origen of Alexandria is perhaps the archetypal Christian teacher of Greek Late Antiquity, Gregory of Nyssa might perhaps have a claim to be the archetypal pupil. Whether it is as the pupil-sibling trying to emerge from the shadows of Basil and Macrina, the erudite man of letters somewhat awkwardly trying to lay claim to the influence of Libanius, or the more confident author setting himself in a line of writers from Moses to Paul, Gregory's construction of his own persona seems frequently tied up with his self-perception as a pupil.

Unfortunately, we have all too little evidence with which to supplement Gregory's own self-presentation. Scholars might in the future fill out more details of the controversies in which he was involved, yet we know relatively little about Gregory's life and very little about his personal qualities—we possess no funeral orations such as those written for Basil, no hagiographies by later admirers and no autobiographical works such as those written by Gregory of Nazianzus. Nyssen's corpus of extant letters is much smaller than those of the other two Cappadocian fathers, containing a mere thirty to thirty-seven epistles (depending on how one settles various questions of attribution), compared to hundreds from Basil and well over a hundred from Gregory of Nazianzus. Furthermore, Nyssen's theological style is notoriously self-effacing and shows a marked tendency to deal with the abstract and the eternal, rather than with the actualities of daily life (expect, perhaps when complaining about argumentative clerics and the discomforts of travelling). By contrast with Basil the church politician and monastic legislator, Gregory is usually read as the

1 A note on texts: all references to the Greek are from the multi-volume Greek edition *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* [GNO], founder editor Werner Jaeger (Leiden), unless otherwise indicated. PG texts are published in the edition of J.P. Migne, *Patriologiae Cursus: Series Graeca*. English translations are taken, unless otherwise indicated, from *Select Writings and Letters of Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa*, trans. W. Moore and H.A. Wilson, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* [NPNF], series 2, vol. 5 (1893, repr. Grand Rapids, Michi., 1994).

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philosopher who struggles with the question of the soul's knowledge of God. Unlike Augustine, however, who grappled with the same questions in his very self-reflective *Confessions*, Gregory shows himself reluctant to place himself directly before the reader as an object of theological enquiry. Ironically, the work that seemingly gives us the nearest thing to a self-portrait is Gregory's *Life* of his sister Macrina.

The framework of his life is simple. Gregory was a younger brother of Basil the Great, being born around 335 A.D., about ten years after Basil, and dying circa 395 A.D. Gregory was sympathetic to and supportive of Basil's monastic programme, but appears never to have been a monk.[2] In fact, although there has been some controversy over the question, the current scholarly consensus is that Gregory was married—possibly not for very long.[3] In his late twenties Gregory took up teaching rhetoric, probably some time after the death of Julian, a profession which he apparently combined with the role of Reader in the Church.[4] He was consecrated bishop of the relatively unimportant see of Nyssa in 371 or 372, but it is unclear whether he had been ordained before this point. Together with Basil and Basil's friend Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory played an important role in the Trinitarian controversies of the last quarter of the fourth century, tirelessly defending an interpretation of the Nicene creed which asserted the full divinity and equality of Father, Son and Spirit against rival interpretations which to a greater or lesser extent subordinated the Son to the Father. At the Council of Constantinople in 381, at which he played a significant role, Gregory of Nyssa was listed as one of those bishops with whom one had to be in communion to be deemed orthodox.[5] Later, he was used as an ecclesiastical envoy, travelling to places such as Arabia and Jerusalem, not always with success.

From this one has very little concrete historical evidence to use when discussing Gregory's own experience of teaching and being taught—on the former question, one can draw a big contrast between him and writers such as

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2 Anna Silvas suggests that Gregory was at least involved in Basil's early ascetic experiment at Annisa: A. Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa: The Letters. Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Leiden, 2007), p. 9. Pierre Maraval rejects this suggestion whilst agreeing that Gregory kept in close contact with monastic communities: P. Maraval, "Biography of Gregory of Nyssa," in L.F. Mateo-Seco and G. Maspero, eds., *The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa* (Leiden, 2010), pp. 105, 115.

3 See Silvas' excellent review of the evidence in her translation of *Gregory of Nyssa: The Letters*, pp. 15–25 and 98–100. See also Maraval, "Biography of Gregory of Nyssa," p. 105.

4 Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa: The Letters*, pp. 12–13; Maraval, "Biography of Gregory of Nyssa," p. 105 (citing Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epist.* 11).

5 Maraval, "Biography of Gregory of Nyssa," pp. 111–112 (citing *CTh* 16.1.3).

Libanius and Himerius. Nevertheless, Gregory's texts abound with references to teaching and teachers, and the question of what made a good Christian teacher preoccupied him a great deal. He not only pursued that question in relation to the normative texts of the Christian tradition—the Old and New Testaments and the writings of various Christian fathers—but he also viewed it through the lens of his classical inheritance. Consequently, my investigation into Gregory's pedagogy will be a fairly literary one, attending less to how Gregory taught and was taught and more to the way in which he constructs the social and theological roles of teachers and pupils in a subtle and complex way. However, my investigation will be literary in another sense, because I will argue that Gregory's construction of the role of teachers and pupils is intimately connected with texts, both the texts which teachers read and use in the classroom, and the texts which are the result of their teaching.

It will become clear that the terms 'teacher' and 'pupil' are used in this paper in a fairly broad sense which encompasses not only the formal arrangement between a teacher of, say, rhetoric or philosophy and a specific group of pupils, but also the relationship between a priest and his congregation and even a much more informal relationship between friends or family members. The last category is particularly important in Gregory's case, because he claims that since he was not able to travel to be educated he had no great teacher and that therefore his teachers were Basil and his oldest sibling Macrina.[6] A tension quickly becomes apparent, however, because Gregory names Basil as his teacher in some contexts and Macrina in others. Thus he exemplifies a phenomenon that we can observe as readily in our own culture as in Late Antiquity—that the claiming of a particular person as one's teacher as much reflects one's construction of one's own identity as it reflects historical fact.

In his *Epist.* 13 to Libanius, Gregory of Nyssa claims that Basil was his teacher, albeit only for a brief time.[7] The primary intention in this letter, however, is to flatter Libanius: Gregory alludes to the fact that Basil was Libanius' pupil for a short while and thus expresses thanks that at least some of Libanius' eloquence has flowed through Basil to himself. In Gregory's other works he frequently refers to Basil not only as ὁ διδάσκαλος, but ὁ διδάσκαλος ἡμων or τοῦ διδασκάλου καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν.[8] This, together with other evidence from the

6 Gregory of Nyssa, *Epist.* 13; Maraval, "Biography of Gregory of Nyssa," p. 104.

7 *Epist.* 13.4.

8 ὁ διδάσκαλος: e.g. Gregory of Nyssa, *In Basilium fratrem* 1.21, 15.2; 17.3; 17.5; 19.4; 27.16; ὁ διδάσκαλος ἡμῶν: Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* 1.1.111.3–4; 21.1.653.6; 1.1.655.2–3; 2.66.2–3; 2.345.4; 2.612.2; *Epist.* 13.5.2; *Apologia in hexaemeron* PG 44: 64.3; τοῦ διδασκάλου καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν: Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* 1.1.478.2, *Apologia in hexaemeron* PG 44: 64.20.

writings of Basil and Gregory Nazianzen, suggests that we should take Gregory at his word when he says he was taught by Basil. However, while Gregory elsewhere implies that he is indebted to Basil for Basil's *theological* instruction, *Letter* 13 focuses on *rhetorical* training and presents Basil and Gregory as being in a fairly conventional teacher-pupil relationship.[9] Gregory also pays tribute to that relationship in a fairly conventional fourth-century way: Basil taught him to do something well and Gregory demonstrates that skill to Libanius with an elegantly-constructed and (he hopes) persuasive letter. That is to say, his relationship to Basil is attested to by a text.

Texts are present elsewhere in *Letter* 13 too. For example, even while Gregory constructs a genealogy of teachers which connects him through a line of *viva voce* pedagogy to an acknowledged master (a means of identification which was very common in the ancient world), he also identifies a second source of his learning: written texts by Libanius which he admits to having read in his spare time (therefore bypassing Basil). However, Gregory further asserts that his teachers were primarily *not* those of Greek rhetoric, but rather the teachers of the Christian faith, that is "Paul and John and the other Apostles and Prophets".[10] Obviously, these were long dead persons whose teaching was available to Gregory only in textual form.

In what follows, I will suggest that it is typical of Gregory to construe the relationship between teacher and pupil as being mediated in one way or another by texts. This is perhaps not surprising, given the fact that all Christians were by then dependent on texts to convey the thoughts of the great teachers of their faith: not only the gospels, but also the writings of "Paul and John and the other Apostles and Prophets". However, it is more surprising when one considers the emphasis which Gregory seems to puts on personal encounter with one's teacher: pedagogy in Gregory's thought is emphatically not just the transmission of true doctrines or ideas, but also the embodiment of certain excellences (ἀρεταί), both intellectual and moral, which it is the pupil's job to imitate. So, Gregory writes in *Letter* 19 about the qualities necessary in a bishop:

> ... the subordinate is conformed to his superior and ... the virtues of the leader become those of his followers. For as the teacher is, so is the disciple fashioned to be. For it is impossible that one who has been apprenticed to the art of the smith should fulfil his training by weaving, or that

9 Basil probably instructed Gregory at Caesarea in Cappadocia around 356, after Basil returned from Athens (Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa*, p. 8).

10 *Epist* 13.4.1–4: διδασκάλους δὲ τοὺς ἡμετέρους, εἰ μὲν ὧν τι δοκοῦμεν μεμαθηκέναι ζητοίης, Παῦλον εὑρήσεις καὶ Ἰωάννην καὶ τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀποστόλους τε καὶ προφήτας.

> one who has been taught to work at the loom should turn out an orator or a surveyor. No, the disciple transfers to himself the pattern he sees in his master. It is for this reason it says, *every disciple shall be fashioned like his teacher* (Lk. 6:40).[11]

This notion of imitation is crucial to the three examples of teachers treated in this paper.

The first example is Basil (Part 2). This great teacher is best praised, Gregory suggests, not by trying to describe his virtues and fine actions, but by imitating them—just as the best way to duplicate the pattern on a signet-ring is not to attempt a verbal depiction, but rather simply to impress it in wax.[12] In Gregory's work *De virginitate* he implies that Basil has been truly successful in imprinting his virtues on the members of his ascetic community, for he writes that if his audience wants an example to follow, but are too dazzled by Basil's own example, they should "look at the chorus of holy men arranged under him" who imitate his example of a virtuous life which combines the energy of youth with the wisdom of mature age.[13] Gregory's metaphor is suggestive here, since he seems to be referring to a chorus such as in a Greek drama, whose members would be directed by, and would imitate the movements of, their leader.[14] In Gregory's *Life of Macrina*, his sister's community of ascetic women

11 *Epist* 17.24: ἀλλ' οἶδεν ὅτι τῷ προέχοντι συμμορφοῦται τὸ ὑποχείριον, καὶ τὰ κατορθώματα τοῦ καθηγουμένου τῶν ἑπομένων γίνεται· ὃ γάρ ἐστιν ὁ διδάσκαλος, τοῦτο καὶ τὸν μαθητὴν ἀπεργάζεται· οὐ γὰρ ἔστι τὸν τῇ χαλκευτικῇ τέχνῃ μαθητευόμενον ὑφαντικὴν ἐξασκῆσαι, ἢ ἱστουργεῖν διδασκόμενον ῥήτορα ἢ γεωμέτρην γενέσθαι, ἀλλ' ὅπερ ἐν τῷ καθηγουμένῳ βλέπει ὁ μαθητής, τοῦτο καὶ εἰς ἑαυτὸν μετατίθησι. διὰ τοῦτό φησι· κατηρτισμένος ἔσται πᾶς μαθητὴς ὡς ὁ διδάσκαλος αὐτοῦ. For the issue of imitating the virtues of one's teacher, see also part 4 below: "The Bride".

12 *In Basilium fratrem* 26.

13 *De virginitate* 23.6.10–12: ἀπόβλεψον εἰς τὸν ὑπ' αὐτῷ τεταγμένον τῶν ἁγίων χορόν. The text of these lines is disputed; here I have followed the text in GNO VIII/1, 340: 4–5, ed. J.P. Cavarnos, rather than Michel Aubineau's influential *Sources Chrétiennes* edition (*Grégoire de Nysse: Traité de la Virginité*, ed. M. Aubineau (Paris, 1966)). My thanks to Neil McLynn for his comments on this passage.

14 As Aubineau has suggested, in *De virginitate* 3 Gregory is reversing the tropes of an epithalamium (*Grégoire de Nysse: Traité de la Virginité*, 89–90, ed. Aubineau). I would go beyond Aubineau to argue that Gregory extends his subversion of literary tropes appropriate to marriage to the whole text so that, for example, the various references to "choruses" not only indicate a spiritual community (as was common in Christian writing at this time), but are also intended as a mirror-image of the choruses usually present in wedding poems and speeches: see *De virginitate* 2.1.5 (Christ is a "chorus-leader of incorruptibility" τῷ δὲ μονογενεῖ θεῷ τῷ τῆς ἀφθαρσίας χορηγῷ [GNO VIII/1, 253: 13]); also *De virginitate* 2.3.3:

is also described as a "chorus" and although the metaphor from drama is not so prominent, the narrative of the work demonstrates time and time again how Macrina succeeded in encouraging others to imitate her: her mother, her brothers and her whole community followed her lead.[15] In this work Macrina is described as the διδάσκαλος not only of her youngest brother Peter, but also of her whole community.[16] It is clear from the way in which Gregory uses διδάσκαλος for Macrina in this work and elsewhere that a large part of her teaching consists in being a model for the holy life: she was, as he says in his *Epist*. 19, our "sister and a teacher of how to live" (Ἦν ἡμῖν ἀδελφὴ τοῦ βίου διδάσκαλος).[17] In the dialogue *On the Soul and the Resurrection* Gregory constantly refers to Macrina as ἡ διδάσκαλος. Macrina, therefore, will be my second example of a teacher (Part 3). My third will be the character of the bride in the *Song of Songs*, a book which Gregory interprets in a series of fifteen sermons (Part 4). The bride, like Macrina, is depicted surrounded by a group of young women whom she instructs and just as Gregory calls Macrina ἡ διδάσκαλος, so in his *Homilies on the Song* the bride is repeatedly described as ἡ διδάσκαλος (a feature of the text which one English translation unfortunately entirely eradicates!).[18] For Gregory, the bride becomes a type of spiritual teachers such as Moses and Paul. In the eyes of early Christians, the legacy of Moses and Paul was largely a textual one, so for Gregory the bride, ἡ διδάσκαλος, becomes a symbol of all theological writers, including Gregory himself.

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the "power of virginity [= Christ?] dances with the supramundane powers" μετὰ τῶν ὑπερκοσμίων χορεύειν δυνάμεων [GNO VIII/1: 255: 6]). For this argument, see "Useful and beautiful: a reading of Gregory of Nyssa's *On Virginity* and a proposal for understanding early Christian literature," in *Irish Theological Quarterly* 79: 3 (2014).

15 τῆς παρθενίας χορὸς: *De vita Macrinae* 16.5, 29.1; τῷ τῶν παρθένων χορῷ: *De vita Macrinae* 33.15.

16 Peter: *De vita Macrinae* 12.13–14: Ἀλλὰ πάντα γενομένη τῷ νέῳ, πατήρ, διδάσκαλος, παιδαγωγός, μήτηρ, ἀγαθοῦ παντὸς σύμβουλος; community: *De vita Macrinae* 26.9: μή που παρὰ τὸ διατεταγμένον αὐταῖς φωνῆς τινος παρ' αὐτῶν ἐκραγείσης λυπηθείη πρὸς τὸ γινόμενον ἡ διδάσκαλος.

17 *Epist* 19.6.1; c.f. *De anima et resurrectione* 46.12.16 ἡ ἀδελφὴ καὶ διδάσκαλος.

18 *Saint Gregory of Nyssa: Commentary on the Song of Songs*, trans. and introd. C. McCambley (Brookline, MASS., 1987). A glaring example is on pages 262–263, where the translator writes, "The teacher [translating ἡ διδάσκαλος], like Philip, says 'Come and see.' *He* leads the virgins to lay hold of him they seek [the groom] instead of saying 'see.' *He* thus indicates the location of the sought-after One.... The bride says [translating φησὶ; no subject in the Greek].... she has shown.... She then shows...." (my emphasis). So, for McCambley, the bride is female, but symbolizes a male teacher, even though in Gregory's text the bride clearly *is* the teacher of the young women of the song (and thus symbolizes a mature Christian teaching other Christians).

2 Basil

In his encomium on Basil, Gregory repeatedly refers to the deceased Basil as ὁ διδάσκαλος, but this is several times combined with "shepherd" (ὁ ποιμὴν), as if to stress Basil's difference from a purely intellectual teacher.[19] Furthermore, as we have seen, Gregory stresses that the best way to praise Basil is to imitate him, rather than depict him in words.[20] However, despite this exhortation to his listeners, Gregory is of course describing Basil's virtues in very formal and elevated speech. Therefore, in time-honoured rhetorical fashion Gregory is on one level maintaining the fiction that he is not able to describe what he is in fact describing very well. On another level, however, he is obeying his own instructions: that is, in his elegant and formal memorial oration Gregory is imitating his brother who was, as he reminds his audience at the beginning of the oration, "sublime in life *and* speech" (τὸν ὑψηλὸν βίῳ τε καὶ λόγῳ).[21] It is particularly appropriate, then, to celebrate this man in words.

Basil's own words are one major focus of Gregory's works against Eunomius (the three books *Against Eunomius* and the *Refutation of Eunomius' Confession*), because these continue an argument which Basil had begun against the same opponent (Basil's five books *Against Eunomius*). Philosophically and theologically speaking, Gregory's arguments are indeed very close to those of his brother (although he probably pushes the apophatic theology which Basil developed against Eunomius to more radical conclusions) and he acknowledges his debt to his brother: "it is right that we too should do battle with our opponents on this ground where our champion (ὁ πρόμαχος ἡμῶν) himself led the way in his own book".[22] Basil is, Gregory writes, "Christ's noble soldier and frequent protagonist against the Philistines, that great spiritual man-at-arms", who leads the "Lord's army" bearing the "sword of the Spirit".[23] But it is striking how Gregory also uses the text of *Against Eunomius* to assert his

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19 ὁ διδάσκαλος e.g. *In Basilium fratrem* 15.2; 17.3; 17.5; 19.4; 27.16; ὁ ποιμὴν καὶ διδάσκαλος: 1.20; 1.23.

20 *In Basilium fratrem* 26: Gregory argues that just as the best way to convey the beauty of the pattern of a signet-ring is to imprint it directly on to wax, rather than to attempt a verbal description, so the best way to praise Basil is simply to imitate him, rather than to enumerate his virtues.

21 *In Basilium fratrem* 1. Although it is often described as a funeral oration, the setting for this speech in honour of Basil seems to be a service held in his memory some time after his death, perhaps even held on the anniversary of his death. As such, it was likely always intended to be transmitted in written as well as preached at the feast.

22 *Contra Eunomium* 2.11.14–16.

23 *Contra Eunomium* 2.10.

theological independence of his teacher. For example, at the beginning of his second book Gregory depicts Eunomius as the Philistine "loud-mouth" Goliath (*Contra Eunomium* 2.4–5), noting that Goliath was defeated twice: first when the stone struck him, secondly when he was decapitated. Gregory concludes from this that, just as David did not shrink from the second task of finishing him off for good, so must he, Gregory, "follow up the first blow with an attack on the fallen, so that the enemy of the truth may be shown to be totally headless" (*Contra Eunomium* 2.5). We might expect Basil's to be the first work, and Gregory's the second, but Gregory asserts, "I readily undertook the first verbal battle" and "I do not draw back from the second battle" (*Contra Eunomium* 2.9). Thus Gregory paints himself as the shepherd David, "a man with no training in the military arts" (ἀμελετήτῳ τῆς πολεμικῆς εὐστροφίας: *Contra Eunomium* 2.4); while Basil is depicted as one of those who "has gained skill in warfare" (τὴν τοῦ πολεμεῖν ἐμπειρίαν: *Contra Eunomium* 2.10). There is surely an echo here of Gregory's oft-repeated statement that he is ill-educated compared to his brother. At one level therefore, Gregory is praising Basil—he is a genuinely great leader—however at another level he is declaring that Basil's military training was not enough to finish Eunomius off and that he, Gregory, had to step in heroically, despite his lack of experience in battle. The important point, however, is that Gregory is making these claims after Basil's death: Gregory's own output increased rapidly after his brother died, almost as if the presence of his former teacher cramped his style. After Basil's death it seems that Gregory was able not only to write more, but also to explore *in his writing* the rather complicated teacher-pupil relationship which he had with his brother.

There is a similar dynamic in the way in which Gregory writes about his task in his works on the first two chapters of *Genesis*. On the one hand, he portrays himself simply as finishing off a task that Basil had begun. This is clear in Gregory's *On the Making of Humankind* (*De hominis opificio*),[24] because Basil's great work on the *Hexameron*—the first six days of creation—did not really discuss the creation of humankind. Gregory's work is addressed to Peter, youngest brother of Gregory and Basil, so Basil is praised as "the father and teacher of both of us" (ὁ κοινὸς ἡμῶν πατὴρ καὶ διδάσκαλος).[25] He is also described in more general honorific terms: Basil is truly created in the image of God (so is worthy to describe creation);[26] he is the "great one" (τῷ μεγάλῳ), the teacher (τοῦ διδασκάλου/τοῦ καθηγητοῦ)[27] whose work exemplified glory

24 Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio* PG 44: 124–256.

25 *De hominis opificio* PG 44: 125.25–26.

26 *De hominis opificio* PG 44: 125.23–25.

27 *De hominis opificio* PG 44: 125.33, 37 and 54.

(τὴν δόξαν) and wisdom (τὴν σοφίαν).[28] If Gregory's task is not done well, it is because Gregory "falls short even of worthily (κατ' ἀξίαν) admiring" Basil, who is the only one who has "worthily (ἀξίως) considered the creation of God".[29] Interestingly, the whole reason for Gregory's work is articulated in teacher-pupils terms: he is driven to write a work on the making of humanity, lest anyone who read Basil's work might have cause to think ill of Basil's work, not so much because he had left the creation of humans out, but because his writing had produced no effect on his pupils. Gregory's excuse for filling in the gaps therefore is to prevent a scoffer from claiming that Basil "had not cared to produce in his hearers any habit of intelligence".[30] Thus, this work, like Gregory's oration on Basil, aims to praise Basil by demonstrating that Basil was an effective teacher whose talents are transmitted in the work of his pupils—whilst at the same time always maintaining the appropriate distance from the master, through the conventional claims that the pupil falls short of his master.

More problematic, however, is Gregory's second work on *Genesis, On the Hexameron*, which could be accused of doing precisely that which Gregory eschewed in *On the Making of Humankind*: that is, duplicating Basil's own work. Indeed, Gregory's tone throughout is somewhat apologetic: he says he is writing in response to those who asked for a treatise on the subject; he is not afraid occasionally to take a different interpretation of a verse from his master, but again he apologizes for doing so.[31] Consequently, Gregory here follows a slightly different strategy in describing his relationship with Basil.[32] He begins with a familiar stance, praising his teacher Basil extravagantly and minimizing his own worth by comparison. Gregory claims that "what [Moses] said briefly and in limited words" Basil expanded upon philosophically.[33] Gregory mixes up various biblical metaphors to claim further that the relation of Moses' text to Basil's is as the grain to a spear of wheat or as the mustard seed to the full-grown tree.[34] While this might seem to imply that Basil outshines his (long-dead) teacher Moses, Gregory's main point is that he, Basil's pupil, struggles to

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28 *De hominis opificio* PG 44: 125.37 and 125.54–55.

29 *De hominis opificio* PG 44: 125.31–32: τοῦ θαυμάζειν αὐτὸν κατ' ἀξίαν ἐνδεῶς ἔχοντες. PG 44: 125.23–24: Μόνος γὰρ ἀξίως τὴν κτίσιν τοῦ Θεοῦ κατενόησεν.

30 *De hominis opificio* PG 44: 124: 43–44: ὡς μὴ βουληθέντος ἕξιν τινὰ κατανοητικὴν τοῖς ἀκροαταῖς ἐνεργάσασθαι.

31 *Apologia in Hexameron* PG 44: 124: 9–20; 89: 31–35.

32 *Apologia in hexaemeron* PG 44: 61–124.

33 *Apologia in hexaemeron* PG 44: 64.1–3.

34 *Apologia in hexaemeron* PG 44: 61.21–64.15, alluding to 1 Cor. 15.35–58 (Paul's famous analogy for the resurrection of the body!) and Mt. 13 (and parallels).

compete with his own “father and teacher”.[35] In a delightful variation of this standard theme, developing the biblical figures he has just introduced, Gregory pictures himself as a little cutting from another plant: “How, therefore, is it possible for me to implant my little shoot into such a great and mature a tree of words”?[36] He replies by alluding the “amazing” method used by gardeners to make one fruit tree bear fruits of several different kinds: like these gardeners, who cut a mature tree to insert a slip which will grow into and with the tree, Gregory will insert his thought (τὴν ἐμὴν διάνοιαν) into the wisdom of Basil’s teaching, where it will grow, nourished and sustained, until it becomes a full branch.[37]

Secondly, Gregory insists that he is following one of Basil’s key principles: to follow the literal meaning of the text of *Genesis*, so far as this is possible, in a clear rejection of more allegorical readings.[38] That is, Gregory is both nourished by his master’s teachings and loyal to his principles.

Thirdly, besides constructing himself as Basil’s loyal but unworthy pupil, Gregory contrasts his and Basil’s goals. On the one hand, Gregory claims that Basil was preaching to a general audience including some educated people, but also artisans, women, older folk and the very young.[39] Consequently, Basil aimed to explain Moses’ text in such a way that it met their need for preaching which through a fine description of the visible creation would lead them carefully to the knowledge of its creator.[40] Nevertheless, the great orator Basil could temper his words to different kinds of audience, so that while his preaching “was wholly dedicated to a simple exegesis of the words (τῆς ἁπλουστέρας τῶν ῥημάτων ἐξηγήσεως), so that his sermon might be accommodated to the simplicity of his audience”, at the same time “it raised up the exegesis of the same text (συναναβαίνειν πως αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐξήγησιν) for those listeners of a greater capacity, in such a way that the exegesis revealed the variety of knowledge of secular philosophy”.[41] He specifically notes that Basil’s intention was *not* to write a polemical treatise, defending the Scriptural account against certain

35 *Apologia in hexaemeron* PG 44: 64.19–20: τῇ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ διδασκάλου.

36 *Apologia in hexaemeron* PG 44: 64.15–18 Πῶς οὖν ἔστι τῷ τοιούτῳ καὶ τηλικούτῳ δένδρῳ τῶν λόγων, ἀντιφυτεῦσαι τὴν βραχεῖαν τῆς διανοίας ἡμῶν ἀποσπάδα; Ἀποσπάς appears to be the Greek technical term for a plant cutting used for propagation: modern English differentiates between a slip (a cutting placed directly in the soil) and a scion (grafted on to the root-stock of another plant).

37 *Apologia in hexaemeron* PG 44: 15–33.

38 Basil, *Hexaemeron* 9.1; Gregory of Nyssa, *Apologia in hexaemeron* PG 44: 124.17–19.

39 *Apologia in hexaemeron* PG 44: 65.3–15.

40 *Apologia in hexaemeron* PG 44: 65.15–19.

41 *Apologia in hexaemeron* PG 44: 65.23–28.

objections brought against it (as, for example, some of Origen's discussions of creation had done).[42] On the other hand, Gregory has a different audience: a questioner who brings detailed questions about creation. In order to answer these queries, Gregory's must leave the average listener behind and ascend to the darkness of the mystery of God.[43] He describes his task as to focus in particular on "the necessary order of creation" (τὴν ἀναγκαίαν τῆς κτίσεως τάξιν)[44] and "to think of a connected and ordered interpretation of the creation of things that have come into being".[45]

The problem is, however hard Gregory tries to assert his loyalty to Basil and the fact that whatever he does is merely grafted on to Basil's magnificent tree of words, he cannot but help distinguish his own task in terms which not only emphasize the difference of his text from his master's but which—it must be admitted—flatter his own achievement. For Gregory describes himself not as a mere branch of Basil's tree, but as a new variety engrafted into it. Although Gregory appears to be describing the production of a tree with two or more varieties of the same fruit—a technique still used today—in another common form of grafting used in viniculture it is only the scion, when grafted into the old stock, which bears the fruit! In any case, the relationship between scion and stock is perhaps slightly more ambiguous than it appears on the surface.[46] Secondly, although Gregory asserts his loyalty to Basil's principle of avoiding

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42 In fact, the distinction which Gregory makes between his and Basil's approaches to Genesis 1 in some ways seems to echo the distinction between Origen's *Commentary on Genesis* (which—so far as it can be reconstructed—defended the theology of creation against pagan critics who thought Genesis to be incoherent) and his *Homilies* which drew a spiritual lesson from Genesis. Although Basil himself rejects Origen's use of allegory, his audience and aim are very similar. For the character of Origen's *Commentary* see R. Heine, "Origen's Alexandrian Commentary on Genesis," in L. Perrone, ed., *Origeniana Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition. Papers of the 8th International Origen Congress, Pisa 27–31 August 2001* (Louvain, 2003), pp. 63–73. For the distinction between Origen's *Commentary* and Homilies on Genesis, see É. Junod, "Wodurch underscheiden sich die Homilien des Origenes von seinem Kommentaren?," in E. Mühlenberg and J. van Oort, eds., *Predigt in der Alten Kirche* (Kampen, 1994), pp. 50–81, and M. Ludlow "Origen as Preacher and Teacher: A Comparison of Exegetical Method in His Homilies and Commentaries," in W.J. Lyons and I. Sandwell, eds., *Delivering the Word: Preaching and Exegesis in the Western Christian Tradition* (Sheffield, 2012), pp. 45–61.

43 *Apologia in hexaemeron* PG 44: 65.29–68.21.

44 *Apologia in hexaemeron* PG 44: 65.35–36.

45 *Apologia in hexaemeron* PG 44: 68.52–54: συνηρτημένην τινὰ καὶ ἀκόλουθον ἐν τῇ κτίσει τῶν γεγονότων ἐπινοῆσαι τὴν θεωρίαν.

46 Gregory's confidence in dealing with the analogy suggest he is familiar with the practice of grafting, in literature if not in real life. See also Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio*

of allegory, he seems to come fairly close to using allegory himself. Thus, he takes great pains to stress that what he is *not* doing is to construct a defence of elements of the text which appear on the surface to be contradictory in a way which imposes a new, coherent, layer of meaning on to the apparent literal inconsistencies of the text.[47] Yet, one might wonder how strictly he keeps to his aim to allow the text to "preserve its own meaning"[48] and wonder still more about the implications of his assertion that through his text one can rise above *hoi polloi*. Although this claim is strictly expressed in terms of Gregory's and Basil's texts having different audiences (and thus might be read in terms of stressing Basil's rhetorical adaptability), nevertheless, it leaves one with the clear impression that Gregory is implying that his is the more scholarly text.[49] One therefore gets the sense from Gregory's works on *Genesis* 1 that it is *through writing them* that Gregory develops from being Basil's pupil to being a distinct writer with, we might say, a distinctive voice of his own—a voice which Gregory describes as being both dependent on, but also significantly different from that of his "master".

3 Macrina

At first sight, Gregory's relations with Macrina his sister look much more straightforward. As we have seen, Gregory describes her as his sister who "was for us a teacher of how to live" and in his hagiography of her he claims that she taught not only himself, but also his brother Peter and the women in her ascetic community at Annesi.[50] In these cases, the emphasis is on Macrina as an ascetic leader: she teaches Christian virtues primarily, it seems reasonable to infer, through inculcating them by example. Although she is described

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PG 44: 240.11 and *De anima et resurrectione* PG 46: 125.31 (ἀποσπάς used in a metaphor for human reproduction) and also *Epist.* 20 to Adelphius in praise of a garden.

47 *Apologia in hexaemeron* PG 44: 68.46–48: Οὐ γὰρ τοῦτό μοι πρόκειται, τὸ, συνηγορίαν τινὰ τοῖς ἐκ τοῦ προχείρου φαινομένοις ἐναντιώμασιν ἐπινοῆσαι· *Apologia in hexaemeron* PG 44: 121.51–54: μήτε τι τῆς γραφικῆς λέξεως εἰς τροπικὴν ἀλληγορίαν μεταποιήσαντες, μήτε παριδόντες τι τῶν ἀντιτεθέντων ἡμῖν ἀνεξέταστον.

48 μενούσης τῆς λέξεως ἐπὶ τῆς ἰδίας ἐμφάσεως: *Apologia in hexaemeron* PG 44: 68.51–52 and 121.55.

49 See the deliberately scholastic language which Gregory applies to his writing at *Apologia in hexaemeron* PG 44: 68.33–35.

50 *Epist.* 19.6.1: Ἦν ἡμῖν ἀδελφὴ τοῦ βίου διδάσκαλος; *De vita Macrinae* 12.13: Ἀλλὰ πάντα γενομένη τῷ νέῳ, πατήρ, διδάσκαλος, παιδαγωγός, μήτηρ; see also *De vita Macrinae* 26.9: ἡ διδάσκαλος.

as having an intimate knowledge of the Scriptures,[51] one might presume she passed this on to the others orally. To this extent, therefore, the pattern of Macrina as educator does not move far beyond the model of the Roman *mulier* who taught children basic literacy and was their moral compass.

Gregory's work *On the Soul and the Resurrection* rather disrupts this picture, however, for in it Gregory presents his sister as leading him in a highly complex and theologically sophisticated dialogue on the nature and destiny of the human soul.[52] The dialogue is set at Macrina's death-bed: Gregory had come to her for consolation on the death of their brother, Basil, only to find her dying too. In their ensuing conversation Macrina comforts him with a rigorous defence not only of the immortality of the soul, but of the resurrection of the body. In the work Macrina is presented as being not only highly educated theologically, but having some awareness of pagan education as well: including literature, mathematics, medicine and astronomy. Whether that is an accurate reflection of Macrina's learning is very difficult to verify;[53] the point is, that Gregory chose to present her that way. One aspect of this portrayal is that in the dialogue he constantly and emphatically refers to her as ἡ διδάσκαλος.[54] A second very important feature is that through echoing the subject-matter, motifs and dramatic construction of Plato's *Phaedo*, Gregory also makes her a Socratic figure—Macrina plays the role of a second, Christian, female, Socrates, whilst also taking on some of the vatic qualities of Diotima in the *Symposium*.[55]

Basil does not mention Macrina in his writings.[56] He might, therefore, be surmised to have had a slightly ambivalent relationship to his older sister, especially with regard to their respective ascetic projects. On the other hand, Gregory of Nyssa's admiration for Macrina is much more obvious and his relationship to Macrina comes across as less complicated than his relationship to Basil: Gregory does not, I think, undermine his praise of his sister in these works as he somewhat undermines his praise of Basil. This is not to say,

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51 *De vita Macrinae* 3.15–26.

52 *De anima et resurrectione* PG 46: 12–160.

53 However, for a spirited defence of Macrina's learning, see A.M. Silvas, *Macrina the Younger: Philosopher of God* (Turnhout, 2008).

54 *De anima et resurrectione* 46: 12.15–16: ἡ ἀδελφὴ καὶ διδάσκαλος. ἡ διδάσκαλος: 12.22; 16.2; 17.4; 20.8; 21.12; 29.7 etc.

55 There is a debate in the secondary literature about whether she should also be seen as a second Diotima (see Plato's *Symposium*): see, for example, V. Burrus, "*Begotten not Made*": *Conceiving Manhood in Late Antiquity* (Stanford, 2000), pp. 112–122. I analyse this debate in my *Gregory of Nyssa: Ancient and (Post)modern* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 206–214.

56 On this—and the way in which Basil's ascetic reputation eclipsed Macrina's—see S. Elm, "*Virgins of God*": *The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 81–82.

however, that his portrayal of her is completely straightforward. In particular, he seems to use his texts about her to assert his own intellectual independence in a couple of quite subtle ways. So, for example, in the dialogue *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, Macrina is the dominant character intellectually and morally: she leads the conversation and she, unlike Gregory, manages to rise above the grief occasioned by Basil's death and her own imminent demise, while Gregory presents himself as her grief-struck, weeping, somewhat sceptical pupil.[57] Nevertheless, as the interlocutor who probes Macrina's statements of faith and drives her to refine them, it is frequently Gregory who moves the dialogue on to a new and nuanced theological position: for example, getting Macrina to acknowledge, after her initial dismissal of all passion, that there are some forms of anger and love that it is good, even necessary, for the Christian to cultivate.[58] Thus, one could argue that *On the Soul and the Resurrection* is, amongst other things, a development, or even a critique of Platonic dialectic. In Plato's dialogues Socrates almost invariably has the upper hand; in *De anima et resurrectione* Gregory depicts philosophical dialectic as he thinks it *ought* to be, with both pupil and teacher advancing in their understanding through an engagement which is much more evidently evenly-matched than the dialogues one finds in Plato. Clearly at one level, then, Gregory is making a statement about the strengths of Christian, as opposed to Platonic, dialectic. At another level, he is presenting himself in the dialogue as the worthy pupil of Macrina.

Gregory also portrays himself as the weeping, grief-struck brother in *On the Life of Macrina*, a master-piece of narrative and narratives-within-narratives which was also occasioned by Gregory's arrival shortly before his sister's death, but which also recounts the rest of her life.[59] In this piece Gregory implicitly

57 On the theme of grief, see especially the opening lines: *De anima et resurrectione* PG 46: 12.13–13.4; on (the character of) Macrina as being dominant, see C.P. Roth, "Platonic and Pauline Elements in the Ascent of the Soul in Gregory of Nyssa's *Dialogue on the Soul and Resurrection*," *Vigiliae Christianae* 46 (1992), 20–30, at p. 21.

58 R. Williams, "Macrina's Death-bed Revisited: Gregory of Nyssa on Mind and Passion," in L. Wickham and C. Bammel, eds., *Christian Faith and Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 1993), pp. 227–246; see also J.W. Smith, "A Just and Reasonable Grief: The Death and Function of a Holy Woman in Gregory of Nyssa's Life of Macrina," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 12 (2004), 57–84, and J.W. Smith, "Macrina, Tamer of Horses and Healer of Souls: Grief and the Therapy of Hope in Gregory of Nyssa's *De anima et resurrectione*," *Journal of Theological Studies* NS 52 (2001), 37–60.

59 For Gregory's grief see especially *De vita Macrinae* 17.17–20; 19.9–15; 26.1–22. For the structure and literary style of *De vita Macrinae*, see G. Frank, "Macrina's Scar: Homeric Allusion and Heroic Identity in Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Macrina*," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8 (2000), 511–530.

presents himself as the worthy pupil of Macrina, not so much in the sense that he is worthy to be her theological interlocutor, but more in the sense that he is worthy to preserve her memory.[60] In his *Life of Macrina* Gregory presents himself as the best possible biographer of her, the one who knew her best, the one who was there at her death-bed, the one who buried her. As he writes to the person who commissioned the biography:

> The trustworthiness of our account does not come from hearing others' accounts, but experience was our teacher (ἡ πεῖρα διδάσκαλος ἦν); our words go over these events in detail, but not at all because we have called on others' hearsay as a witness. The maiden we have remembered was no stranger to my family, so that it was not necessary for me to learn the amazing facts about her from others.[61]

Although Gregory presents himself as a godly man in the *Life of Macrina*, he is weak compared to his sister. He is the best pupil, not in the narrow literal sense that he was the best at following Macrina's ascetic route, but in a literary sense: he is the one who best preserved her memory. Gregory is therefore simultaneously using his text both to celebrate his teacher, but also to establish his claim to be her true heir—much as, for example, Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* not only praises the great philosopher, but portrays "I, Porphyry" as the true successor of the master, in the face of various possible rival claims.[62] Just as it was easier for Gregory to articulate his relationship to his διδάσκαλος Basil after Basil died, so, for obvious reasons it was easier for Gregory to lay claim to this special relationship with Macrina, ἡ διδάσκαλος, after her death. In both cases, his relationships with his teachers are articulated in the texts he wrote about them; but more than that, the texts themselves partly constitute or instantiate the kind of relationships he had with Basil and Macrina. One might even say that after their deaths Gregory uses his texts to mediate a kind of continuing relationship with them.

This idea of texts mediating a relationship is present more strongly in the *Life of Macrina* than in the texts concerning Basil. Halfway through his description

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60 A theme present in D. Krueger, "Writing and the Liturgy of Memory in Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Macrina*," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8 (2000), 483–510.

61 *De vita Macrinae* 1.17–22.

62 M. Edwards, "Introduction," in M. Edwards, ed., *Neoplatonic Saints: The Lives of Plotinus and Proclus by their Students* (Liverpool, 2000), p. xxxvi: Edwards notes that Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* is very self-defensive: the disciple whose name appears most is his own—"almost always coupled with the emphatic pronoun *ego*".

of his sister's life, Gregory has a vision-like dream in which he sees himself bearing a body in his hands. It glows and he describes it as if it were already a relic.[63] When he arrives at Macrina's house he fears that it is her death that his dream portends and indeed when she dies, Macrina's body seems to him to glow like the relic in his dream.[64] Only then does Gregory fully recognize the significance of his dream. Having established Macrina's body as a relic, then, Gregory as author also makes connections between the "body" of his text (the narrative) and Macrina's own body. For example, Macrina's final prayer to Christ weaves together the experiences of her own life with a brief resume of salvation-history.[65] When she offers herself up to Christ at the end, the implication is that she is offering her whole self up: soul, body and her whole story. The question for Gregory then becomes: how can the memory of the saint be preserved? In conventional Christian piety, there would be two methods: the veneration of her relics and the recollection of her life, often taking the form of a *Vita* recited at her tomb on her feast-day. Thus the story of a life becomes associated with a body. In the *Life of Macrina*, the text itself seems to become a relic of his sister, a holy and almost sacramental object which brings the believer into contact with the saint. Derek Krueger comments:

> As the vision reveals, Gregory holds possession of and control over the relics. He handles her remains: first her body, and thus later her memory. As the author of the text, Gregory holds authorial control over her story, manipulating her identity. Physical relics are the remains witnessing to the work of the indwelling Spirit in the life of the saint. Gregory's narrative offers an analogue, a narrative remembrance of the saint attesting her holiness, lest her virtue be forgotten. In the end, the text of the *Life of Macrina* is itself a relic, a witness to her saintly life, held in the author's hands. Materializing her memory, text substitutes for body.[66]

In this way, I suggest, Gregory did not write the *Vita* of his sister just to mediate his *own* continuing relationship with his sister; rather, his text allows a wider audience to come into her presence. Just as his own text shifts its focus from the individual and personal (Gregory's arrival and encounter with Macrina), to Macrina's community (his conversations with her companions), to the wider local public (the funeral), so Gregory's vision for the preservation of Macrina's memory expands beyond the narrative of the text itself. He hopes that by being

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63 *De vita Macrinae* 15.12–22.

64 *De vita Macrinae* 19.9–15; 33.8–12.

65 *De vita Macrinae* 23.11–24.46.

66 Krueger, "Writing and the Liturgy of Memory," p. 504.

drawn into her story, other Christians will be drawn to imitate her life. In other words, it is by writing this text, that Gregory negotiates the transition between being a pupil and becoming a teacher himself.

4 The Bride

In this final section, I will suggest that Gregory thinks that the texts of Scripture function in a similar way as expressing, continuing and transforming the teacher-pupil relationship—but in this case, the teacher is Christ. For Gregory, Jesus Christ was the archetypal teacher.[67] The apostles were not just witnesses to the events of Jesus' life, but were disciples who passed on the truths of the Gospel and in that process of transmission became teachers themselves. Unlike some of the earlier Church fathers, however, Gregory sees such teaching in very textual terms. This is evident even in his interpretation of the *Song of Songs*, a biblical book which, on the face of it, would not appear to be about writing at all.

Gregory recognizes that the *Song of Songs* is an extended poem which portrays the relationship between a lover and his beloved dramatically and in direct speech. His interpretation is clearly very heavily influenced by that of Origen of Alexandria (c.185–c.254); however, while Origen's exposition focused on the bride as a symbol of the individual soul or the Church, for Gregory she is the archetype of a teacher—Gregory repeatedly refers to the bride in the *Song* as ἡ διδάσκαλος. Furthermore, Gregory develops Origen's interpretation of the bride's friends. Origen noted that they were a pedagogical device: the bridesmaids are "learning to be brides" and the bride—having experienced the secrets of the bedchamber—"comes back to the maidens and tells them the things that she alone has seen".[68] The hearer of the *Song*, therefore, is encouraged to identify imaginatively with the bridesmaids as well as the bride: "Listen to the *Song of Songs* and make haste to understand it and to join with the Bride in saying what she says, so that you may hear also what she heard. And, if you are unable to join the Bride in her words ... then be with the maidens who stay in the Bride's retinue and share her pleasures".[69] The *Song* therefore is treated by Origen as an anagogical text: he believes that if it is read in the correct way it leads its readers further towards and raises them up to God. Gregory develops

67 See e.g. Gregory of Nyssa, *De Beatitudinibus* 1.1 (GNO VII/2, 77.4–78.25); *De oratione dominica* 1 (GNO VII/2, 5.2–11).

68 Origen, *Homiliae in canticum canticorum* 1.5, trans. R.P. Lawson, in *Origen, The Song of Songs: Commentary and Homilies* (Westminster, MD, 1957), pp. 274–275.

69 Origen, *Homiliae in Canticum canticorum* 1.1, trans. Lawson, pp. 267–268.

this line of thought by emphasizing the bride's function as a teacher: for example, she teaches the maidens true doctrine (τὸ δόγμα) and is a seeker of wisdom (ἡ σοφία);[70] as a good teacher should, she adapts her teaching to the level of her pupils.[71] But she does not merely communicate facts about Jesus Christ, but also points the way to him:

> And the teacher (ἡ διδάσκαλος), like Philip who said "come and see", directs (καθηγεῖται) the maidens towards the apprehension of the one whom they seek; instead of saying "see", she indicates the location of the one who is sought and where she sees [him].... Therefore the bodily [aspect] of her speech (ἡ σωματικὴ τοῦ λόγου) to the young girls, is a signpost by which they learn both where he is and where she is looking.[72]

This idea of pointing or leading the way seems to be an important function of a teacher according to Gregory, for in his commentary on the Beatitudes, for example, he several refers to Christ, the Word of God, as leading the way and he connects this specifically to Christ's teaching function.[73] Besides telling the maidens about Christ, and showing them the way to him, Gregory thinks that the bride also gives her entourage of maidens a Christ-like example to imitate:

> "Having taken on himself the stain of my sins, he shared his own purity with me and, with his own beauty, he made me perfect like him...." After these words, she urges the young girls to be beautiful themselves, showing them her own beauty, like the great Paul who said "Become as I am, for I also have become as you are" [Gal. 4.12] and "Be imitators of me as I am of Christ" [1 Cor. 11.1]. For this reason, she does not allow the souls who are her pupils to despair of becoming beautiful when they look back on their past life, but she lets them learn by example, looking at her.[74]

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70 Gregory of Nyssa, *In canticum canticorum* GNO VI: 51.10–11: οὐκοῦν τοῦτο παρὰ τῆς διδασκάλου τὸ δόγμα μανθάνομεν; 268.16–269: ἐπειδὴ γὰρ παρὰ τὴν μέλισσαν φοιτᾶν τὸν τῆς σοφίας μαθητὴν ὁ παροιμιακὸς βούλεται λόγος νοεῖς δὲ πάντως ἐκ τῶν μαθημάτων τὴν διδάσκαλον ἥτις ἐστίν. Cf the divine Word condescending to the level of human understanding: *De Beatitudinibus* GNO VII/2: 90.26–91.3. Translations from *In canticum canticorum* are my own.

71 *In canticum canticorum* GNO VI: 381.14–16: τούτου χάριν πρὸς ταῦτα ἡ διδάσκαλος βλέπει καὶ περὶ τούτων ποιεῖται τὸν λόγον ὅσα δύναται γενέσθαι χωρητὰ τοῖς ἀκούουσιν; cf *In canticum canticorum* GNO VI: 45.20–46.1.

72 *In canticum canticorum* GNO VI: 435.8–12.

73 *De Beatitudinibus* 1.1 (GNO VII/2: 78.1–11); III.1(GNO VII/2: 98.24–99.6).

74 *In canticum canticorum* GNO VII/2: 46.13–47.4.

One could compare the role of the bride here to the way in which Basil and Macrina were in different ways examples for Gregory and Gregory's readers to imitate. However, in Gregory's writings on the *Song* the process of imitation is entirely mediated by texts. Firstly, this is because the bride and her maidens are themselves fictional characters. Secondly, however, Gregory interprets them as *referring to* historical theological writers. By being drawn into the beautiful and dramatic text of the *Song*, the audience is encouraged not only to identify imaginatively with the bride and her maidens, but also to consider whom they might be portraying. A key comparison—as we have just seen—is of the bride to Paul: he is an example of someone who, in Gregory's words, "once he became a 'vessel of election' had the Lord both with himself and in himself, in that … he no longer lived his life for himself, but showed Christ living in him and gave 'proof that Christ is speaking in' him".[75] This interplay between the reception of divine grace and becoming its living conduit or communicator is very similar to the interplay we have noted above in relation to the bride. Indeed, in another passage Gregory makes the connection explicitly: "Paul, the bride, imitates the groom through the virtues", breathing in Christ like incense and exuding his scent to others.[76] Although Paul is primarily the teacher to whom the bride is compared, Gregory also draws comparisons with John, Moses and—by extension—with other biblical writers.[77]

Of course the *Song* itself is a scriptural text, and by making the *Song* into a text about teachers Gregory is implying that the author of the *Song* too should be regarded precisely as one of those great teachers. That was not an obvious move in Gregory's day, for it seems that there was some opposition to the reading of the *Song* as a Christian text because of its apparently overt eroticism. Gregory's preface to his *Homilies on the Song* defends his allegorical interpretation of the text, but he seems to imply that if the *Song* were not read allegorically, it would not be read at all in Christian communities—hence he is working hard so that his work might have a "public hearing" (τὴν δημοσίαν ἀκοὴν).[78] In this way, many more can be enlightened by a text that was once regarded as dangerous or private. Thus, Gregory hopes for a public audience so that he

75 *In canticum canticorum* GNO VI: 88.1–5; citing Acts 9.15 and 2 Cor. 13.3.

76 *In canticum canticorum* GNO VI: 91.4–13 (οὕτω καὶ Παῦλος, ἡ νύμφη, ὁ διὰ τῶν ἀρετῶν τὸν νυμφίον μιμούμενος).

77 e.g. John: *In canticum canticorum* GNO VI: 40.13–42.3; Moses: *In canticum canticorum* GNO VI: 181.4–6. See also *In canticum canticorum* GNO VI: 301.19–303.2 (the bride, causing a fragrant stream of spices to flow, is compared to the Church and specifically to Paul, John, Luke, Matthew and Mark).

78 *In canticum canticorum* GNO VI: 13.17.

might convey the fruits of this text more broadly, not so that he can make a literary "display" (ἐπίδειξίν)—that is, he is presenting himself as a teacher, not a rhetorician.[79] In his preface, Gregory also compares the *Song*'s symbolic style to Christ's method of teaching, since he "exercised" his disciples' minds "through words which were veiled and hidden in parables, in analogies, in obscure words and in apophthegms conveyed though riddles".[80] Furthermore, Gregory defends his allegorical reading of the *Song* with reference to Paul's method of reading the Old Testament.[81] In doing this, Gregory is therefore setting himself as the pupil of such teachers as Paul—and Christ himself. But that imposes on him the responsibility to teach what he has learnt. Just as the bride learned from the groom and taught her pupils, just as Paul learned from Christ and taught those to whom his letters were addressed, Gregory has his own pupils in the church to enlighten. Thus, although the *Song* compares the bride specifically to Paul, or John or Moses, the comparison is not restricted to those writers: I suggest that Gregory takes the comparison also to apply to himself.

To recapitulate my argument, I am suggesting that in his texts about Basil and Macrina Gregory of Nyssa does not merely commemorate his siblings in a "monument more lasting than bronze".[82] Rather, the texts first articulate his relationship with them specifically as his teachers and, secondly, allow him to continue that relationship with them after their death. Thirdly, through these texts, his relationship with his sibling-teachers changes, because in the writing of them he ceases to become a mere pupil but becomes a teacher in their stead. In this way he is passing on the riches of his teachers to a wider audience. Gregory also sees his *Homilies on the Song of Songs* as designed for a wide audience, but while Gregory's works on Basil and Macrina were designed to mediate his real-life encounters with his siblings to a wide audience through the medium of texts, his work on the *Song* is mediating an encounter with a *text* to that wider audience. In each case, Gregory portrays himself in the complex position of being a pupil-turning-teacher and—I suggest—portrays his process of writing as the means by which he moves from one to the other.

Gregory's concept of pedagogy, therefore, is bound up with this particular social function of texts: they have a vital role in the complex interplay between teacher and pupils, a role which he sees as both fruitful and problematic. What makes Gregory's thought on this question so interesting is that this social role of literature is both described in, and exemplified by, Gregory's own writings.

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79 *In canticum canticorum* GNO VI: 13.8.

80 *In canticum canticorum* GNO VI: 8.6–10.

81 *In canticum canticorum* GNO VI: 5.9–7.16.

82 Horace, *Carmina* 3.30.

CHAPTER 7

Unreliable Witness: Failings of the Narrative in Ammianus Marcellinus

John Weisweiler

1 Introduction

Gallus was dead.[1] The nephew of the ruling emperor Constantius, grand-nephew of Constantine, junior emperor of the Roman empire: a disfigured corpse, hands bound together like a bandit, his neck cut through.[2] Forgotten his once dignified appearance, forgotten the beauty of his face and of his fair blond hair. Forgotten also the terror he once had inspired in cities and provinces (14.11.23). Gallus had been executed on the order of Constantius—at the same place, in the garrison town Pula on the Istrian peninsula, where years before, Crispus, eldest son of Constantine, had been suffocated in a sauna on the order of his father on allegations of adultery with his stepmother (14.11.20).[3]

Gallus' rule had been cruel. On his final journey from his residence in Antioch to the western imperial court (where he would never arrive), in his dreams, his victims had appeared as terrifying spectres: amongst them Montius and Domitianus, high-ranking imperial office-holders, dragged through Antioch

1 The *Res gestae* are quoted in the Teubner edition by W. Seyfarth (Berlin, 1978). In longer passages, double spaces are employed to indicate breaks between clausulae. Translations are my own, but the Penguin version by W. Hamilton, *Ammianus Marcellinus: The Later Roman Empire* (Harmondworth, 1986) has often been consulted with profit.

2 Gallus' rule and Ammianus' account of it: E.A. Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Cambridge, 1943), pp. 56–71; R. Blockley, "Constantius Gallus and Julian as Caesars of Constantius II," *Latomus* 31 (1972), 433–445; H. Tränkle, "Der Caesar Gallus bei Julian," *Museum Helveticum* 33 (1976), 162–179; G. Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin* (Paris, 1978), pp. 456–463; T.G. Elliott, *Ammianus Marcellinus and Fourth Century History* (Toronto, 1983), pp. 15–21; T.D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca, 1998), pp. 129–132; B. Bleckmann, "Gallus, César de l'Orient?," in F. Chausson and É. Wolff, eds., *Consuetudinis amor: Fragments d'histoire Romaine IIe–VIe siècles offerts à Jean-Pierre Callu* (Roma, 2003), pp. 45–56; G. Kelly, *Ammianus Marcellinus: The Allusive Historian* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 284–293. Chronology: T.D. Barnes, "Structure and Chronology in Ammianus, Book 14," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 92 (1989), 413–422.

3 Other sources: see PLRE I s.v. Fl. Iulius Crispus 4.

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by Gallus' soldiers, then thrown into the river Orontes, joints and limbs dislocated, their bodies mutilated beyond recognition (14.11.18, cf. 14.7.15–6). They were not isolated cases. The victims of Gallus were to be found across the entire Roman East, in all social classes (14.7.1). Informers were everywhere (14.1.2 and 1.6), an atmosphere in which even walls were thought to be able to divulge secrets to the emperor's agents (1.7).[4] Justice had disappeared from the courts: no charges, no accusers were necessary (14.1.4–5, 7.21, 9.3–5). Gallus had been like a wild lion, feeding on human flesh (14.9.9, cf. 1.10 and 7.21). He was a rightly despised criminal whose brutal death seemed an appropriate (and ironic) end.

The text then suddenly seems to refute itself. The sight of Gallus' headless corpse in Pula evokes pity in the mind of the reader.[5] The narrator rejoices that Gallus' murderers—executors of Constantius' orders (14.11.23 *eum capitali supplicio destinauit*), the unwitting reader would have thought—and the man who had for a long time already made up false charges against him (*qui in eum iam diu falsa composuerat crimina*)—*false* charges?—would soon also face terrible deaths (14.11.24). Nemesis, Justice's daughter, did not rest (14.11.25). In later books, mention is made of the men who had betrayed Gallus and plotted against him (18.3.6 and 22.3.3). And Julian, Gallus' half-brother, knew the reason for his brother's fall: Gallus' weakness and the combined treachery and perjury of certain people (21.1.2 *quem inertia mixtaeque periuriis fraudes prodidere quorundam*).

Ammianus Marcellinus' *Res gestae* is the most important surviving history of the Later Roman empire. It is the only source for many of the events described. For Edward Gibbon, Ammianus Marcellinus was "an accurate and faithful guide, who has composed the history of his own times, without indulging the prejudices and passions, which usually affect the mind of the contemporary."[6] These views have had a lasting impact, setting the terms for most modern discussions of Ammianus. Many scholars see Ammianus as an almost modern historian, relying on eyewitness reports and even collecting archival material

4 Cf. Tacitus, *Annales* 4.69.3.

5 R. Blockley, "A note on Ammianus Marcellinus 14.11.23," *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 5 (1980), 11–12 exposes the double Vergilian allusion to Cacus, brigand killed by Hercules (*Aeneis* 8.264–265), and to Priamus' dead body (*Aeneis* 2.556–558). On the significance of the intertext, see further Kelly, *Allusive Historian*, pp. 288–289.

6 E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 2 (London, 1781), p. 627.

to find out what actually happened.[7] For them, Ammianus is an impartial and accurate historian, "a still living challenge to the modern historian of his age", as John Matthews puts it in his, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (Baltimore 1989), the most powerful modern restatement of Gibbon's position (362).

A close reader of the *Res gestae* will however notice incongruities between authorial comment and narrative, and inconsistencies within the narrative itself. Both are neatly exemplified by the account of Gallus' rule in Antioch and his bloody execution. The later admission that there was an active opposition to the junior emperor fits uncomfortably with the earlier depiction of his reign as a rule of terror, the judgments of his courts being nothing but judicial murders. On re-reading the text carefully, an alternative version to that suggested by the narrator can be reconstructed: "Though he never specifically admits that it is such, Ammianus has given an account of a plot against Gallus, its failure and the trial and execution of the conspirators".[8] The inconsistencies in Ammianus' account are particularly unsettling, since Ammianus was in Antioch at least during a part of the events he describes: moreover, he was with his superior Ursicinus when the latter had to serve as a judge in the treason trials under Gallus.

Modern scholarship has taken three different approaches to the incongruities of the *Res gestae*. Firstly, Otto Seeck, in a classic paper, had explained the contradictions in the *Res gestae* by the inability of the historian to combine conflicting source materials to produce a consistent version of events.[9] Secondly, John Matthews accounted for the partly inconsistent nature of Ammianus' text by lack of revision: "by the supposition that the historian failed fully to master, or to revise thoroughly—or both—his complicated source material".[10] More influential than these explanations was the third approach to the problem. Since Edward Thompson's book on Ammianus, published in

7 Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin*, pp. 115–217 and D. Rohrbacher, *The Historians of Late Antiquity* (London, 2002), p. 40.

8 Blockley, "Constantius Gallus and Julian," 434–435.

9 O. Seeck, "Zur Chronologie und Quellenkritik des Ammianus Marcellinus," *Hermes* 41 (1906), 481–539. More recent source criticism is more circumspect in judging Ammianus' literary skill: F. Paschoud, "Valentinien travesti, ou: De la malignité d'Ammien," in J. Den Boeft, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler, eds., *Cognitio Gestorum: The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Amsterdam, 1992), pp. 67–84 and B. Bleckmann, "Vom Tsunami von 365 zum Mimas-Orakel: Ammianus Marcellinus als Zeithistoriker und die spätgriechische Tradition," in J. den Boeft, J.-W. Drijvers, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler, eds., *Ammianus after Julian: The Reign of Valentinian and Valens in Books 26–31 of the Res gestae* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 7–32.

10 J. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Baltimore, 1989), p. 216.

1947, the incongruities in his account have usually been explained as evidence of bias: evidently, Ammianus had distorted the historical record because of his sympathies for the curial class, for his superior Ursicinus, for Julian or for paganism, but had not been quite able to hide his manipulations from the alert reader. Timothy Barnes in his, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca, 1998) put forward these views in their most pointed form. He aimed to demonstrate how Ammianus' literary technique served to distort and misrepresent "historical reality". Above all, he detected anti-Christian bias in Ammianus' silences. For Barnes, the *Res gestae* was pagan polemic: 'Ammianus failed in his obligation as a historian to strive to transcend personal bias' (viii).

Such debates are important, but I am not convinced that they offer the most profitable way forward in thinking about Ammianus and his history. The problem crystallizes in places in the text where the narrator fails to persuade the careful reader of his version of history. For the defenders of Ammianus' truthfulness like Matthews, these passages are an embarrassment; for others like Barnes, they are hard evidence of bias. For both, they represent a (either potential or actual) threat to Ammianus' quality as a historian.

However, it is not clear whether this is the most productive way in which the purpose and achievement of the *Res gestae* can be assessed. In his outstanding study, *Ammianus Marcellinus: The Allusive Historian* (Cambridge, 2008), Gavin Kelly has studied the literary techniques deployed by Ammianus in his text. He demonstrates that Ammianus was a self-conscious and manipulative writer in the classical style. Not only was the *Res gestae* deeply shaped by targeted to allusions the full corpus of Latin literature. Apparently autobiographical passages in Ammianus' work are shown to be highly stylized literary constructions, which interact in artful ways with earlier historical texts. The sophistication of Ammianus' historiographical technique, exposed by Kelly, problematizes attempts to explain apparent incongruities in his narratives by reference to the author's bias or incompetence.

In this paper, I should like to try out a different approach to understanding these 'failings of the narrative'. Interestingly, when readers of the *Res gestae* are addressed, they are expected constantly to question what they are told by the narrator. In 16.7.4, for instance, it becomes clear that the ideal reader of the *Res gestae* is a pedant.[11] The reader will not believe the narrator's claims

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11 Cf. also 14.6.2 *et quoniam mirari posse quosdam peregrinos existimo haec lecturos* <u>*forsitan*</u> ... 21.1.14 *et quoniam existimo* <u>*forsitan*</u> *aliquos haec lecturos exquisite scrutando notare* ... and 31.5.10 ... *id lecturos obtestamur, ne quis a nobis* <u>*scrupulose*</u> *gesta uel numerum exigat peremptorum* ...

(in this case, that there were no good eunuchs in history except Eutherius) but will try and refute him: *uerum si forte scrupulosus quidam lector antiquitatum Menophilum… nobis opponat…* In Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, the narrator Lucius argues in similar terms against a reader who would question his account: *sed forsitan lector scrupulosus reprehendens narratum meum sic argumentaberis…* (9.30, p. 225.11 Helm). Jack Winkler, in his influential reading of the *Metamorphoses*, with the telling title *Auctor & Actor*, has convincingly argued that the *lector scrupulosus*, the meticulous reader of the text, plays the main part in the novel.[12] The reader is constantly asked to make sense both of the story told by the narrator and of the stories told to the narrator by others. But when the correct interpretation seems to be reached, it is again subverted. The reader is implicated in a narratological game from which there is no escape and in which no definite solutions are offered. His reading practice mirrors the always failing interpretative efforts of Lucius, the all too gullible narrator of the novel.

It is possible that the same sort of challenge is presented to the reader of the *Res gestae*. Maybe the choice is not between bias and impartiality, or between fact and fiction, rather readers are presented with competing versions of historical truth from which they have to construct their own histories. Maybe, to return to the example with which I have opened this section, the continuously changing image of Gallus' rule does not convict the author of incompetence, but instead challenges the competence of the reader to find out what really happened, and is perhaps ultimately testimony to the fact that this is an impossible enterprise. On this reading, the *Res gestae* was both a complex account of the past *and* an unsettling exploration of the problems of representing that past.

Recognition of the complex forms of authorial self-awareness displayed by Ammianus in his work advances our understanding of this text in at least two ways. On the one hand, it enables us to define more clearly the place of the Ammianus in the tradition of the genre. Since Thucydides, the dangerous ways in which susceptibility to emotion and the frailty of the human sensory apparatus undermine attempts by historians to produce a full and truthful account of past events is a recurrent topic in ancient historical literature. The fractured and multi-perspectival shape of Ammianus' narrative may be seen as a contribution to long-standing debates about the epistemic status of historical literature. On the other hand, the literary technique of the *Res gestae* may profitably be read as a response to problems of representation specific to the society in

12 J.J. Winkler, *Auctor & Actor: A Narratological Reading of Apuleius' 'The Golden Ass'* (Berkeley, 1985). See particularly chapter 3: "The Scrupulous Reader".

which it was produced. In a recent paper on the early-third-century historian Cassius Dio, Maud Gleason has argued that the prominence in his history of stories involving impersonation and masquerades was a product of the anxieties generated amongst the imperial élite by the high frequency of régime change and the emergence of new patterns of social mobility in the Severan period.[13] Similarly, the distinctive literary texture of Ammianus' history may profitably be seen an attempt to find an appropriate language to describe the unstable social world in which the governing élite of the Later Roman Empire lived.

The remainder of the paper consists of three case studies of Ammianus' literary technique, followed by a conclusion. I begin with a close reading of his account of the usurpation of Silvanus in 355. Here, a subtle narratological construction invites the reader to question the version of the narrator (2). In the following section, I move to an analysis of the account of how Ammianus observed from a mountain in Corduene the invading Persian army. The narrator's authority is put under heavy pressure because the text is constructed in such a way that most readers will find it difficult to believe these claims to autopsy. Ammianus was an eyewitness—but what he pretends to have seen belongs to the world of the *adynata* (3). Finally, in the Craugasius episode, the historical text is generically undermined. An intertext with the novel, the genre of lies, subverts the historical text, the discourse of truth (4). The conclusion situates Ammianus' literary technique in the social context in which it was produced (5).

2 Obliterated Text

2.1 *Silvanus*

In A.D. 355, in Cologne, the headquarters of the Roman Rhine army, Dynamius, head of the imperial baggage train, asked his superior Silvanus for some letters of reference (15.5.1). Silvanus was the new commander of the Roman troops on the Rhine frontier. At the same as Silvanus was putting his signature on the documents, groups of Germanic invaders were plundering and burning down Gallic villages. The Roman authorities had proved unable to defend the province. However, hope had now returned. Silvanus was an able general: he would, it was expected, defeat the invaders and save the province (2 *efficax ad haec corrigenda*).

13 M. Gleason, "Identity Theft: Doubles and Masquerades in Cassius Dio's Contemporary History," *Classical Antiquity* 30 (2011), 33–86.

Dynamius, cunning and deceitful (4 *uersutus et in fallendo exercitatus*), had other plans. With a sponge, he erased the text of Silvanus' references. Only the signatures beneath the documents were now visible. Another text, entirely different from the original, was written above. According to it, Silvanus asked the recipients in oblique words for their support—his aim seemed to be the throne. Dynamius passed the bundle of letters to the praetorian prefect Lampadius (an accomplice of his, it was later rumoured); Lampadius immediately sent them to the imperial court.

There, the letters were not read with the appropriate care. The emperor Constantius II, the last surviving son of Constantine, immediately gave orders that their intended recipients should be placed under arrest. Silvanus, it was decided, was to be honourably recalled before he might be tempted to make any treasonable move. In the meantime, Dynamius sent out another letter, this time not only in the name of Silvanus but also of Malarich, another high officer and an old friend of Silvanus. The recipient was the manager of an imperial weapon factory (*fabrica*) in Cremona. He was urged swiftly to make 'everything' ready (15.5.9 *propere parare cuncta*). The manager was a more careful reader. He pondered the meaning of the letter for a long time. Eventually, he returned it to Malarich by the same courier, begging him to say what he wanted plainly and not in riddles (10). When Malarich received the forged letter, he realized what had happened and made his indignation public: some people were after his and his comrades' lives (11). The emperor immediately convened the *consistorium*. At the session, Florentius, *magister officiorum* (the senior officer in the palatine bureaucracy), scrutinized the document carefully (12 *contemplans diligentius scripta*). Under the new writing, he made out the shadowy outlines of the previous text (*apicumque pristinorum quasi quandam umbram repperiens*), quite different from what Silvanus had allegedly written.

Thus, the cloud of deceit was dissipated (13 *fallaciarum nube discussa*). But, in the meantime, Silvanus, fearing for his life, had declared himself emperor. At dawn in his twenty-eighth day of rule,[14] Silvanus, on the way to his morning prayer, was slaughtered by a band of Germanic mercennaries. They had been hired by a group of *protectores*, amongst them Ammianus, under the command of Ursicinus, who had allegedly defected to Silvanus' side. At the imperial court in Milan, the emperor ordered an enquiry into who had been involved in the conspiracy against Silvanus. A certain Eusebius confessed under torture that he had been an accessory. Nobody was convicted. Dynamius was promoted to the governorship of Etruria—*ut praeclaris artibus illustratus* (14). But Silvanus—a

14 28 days: Aurelius Victor, *Caesares*, 42.16; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epitome de Caesaribus*, 42.10; cf. Julian, *Oratio* 3.99a.

general of no little merit in the defence of the empire—had been tragically killed (32).

The Silvanus episode is well-studied. Older scholarship in particular has valued it as an accurate eyewitness account of a participant observer of the events.[15] More recently, Ammianus' truthfulness has been challenged on the basis of internal inconsistencies. John Drinkwater, followed by Timothy Barnes, considering it impossible that Ursicinus and Ammianus were peacefully received in Cologne when the insurrection had already broken out, has even gone so far as to question whether the insurrection of Silvanus had ever happened. Drinkwater suggests that Ursicinus may have killed Silvanus 'out of self-interest'.[16] The contradictions in Ammianus' account would then stem from an attempt to hide the guilt of his much-admired commander. In view of the early parallel accounts which exist (see below), such radical scepticism cannot convincingly be maintained. David Hunt, in the most recent study on the episode, has shown that in the *Res gestae*, two contradictory images of Silvanus are merged.[17] In Hunt's view, Silvanus was first portrayed as a victim of court intrigue to reinforce his characterization of Constantius as paranoid tyrant. However, when Ammianus and Ursicinus entered the narrative, Silvanus was relabelled 'as straightforward usurper [to] banish scruples about the treacherous methods used to undermine him' (p. 59). Thus, like Drinkwater, Hunt sees the reason for the 'double-edged, not to say self-contradictory, nature of Ammianus' Silvanus episode' (p. 51) in authorial bias, ultimately originating in Ammianus' biography: in his admiration for Ursicinus and concomitant hatred of Constantius.

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15 See W. Den Boer, "The Emperor Silvanus and his army," *Acta Classica* 3 (1960), 105–109; Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus*, pp. 44–45; Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin*, pp. 182–183; D.C. Nutt, "Silvanus and the Emperor Constantius II," *Antichthon* 7 (1973), 80–89; N.J. Austin, "Autobiography and History: Some Later Roman Historians and their Veracity," in B. Croke and A.M. Emmett, eds., *History and Historians in Late Antiquity* (Sidney, 1983), pp. 54–65, at pp. 57–58; Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus Marcellinus*, pp. 37–38.

16 J.F. Drinkwater, "Silvanus, Ursicinus and Ammianus Marcellinus: Fact or Fiction?," in C. Deroux, ed., *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History VII* (Bruxelles, 1994), pp. 568–576, quoted at pp. 575–576; Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality*, pp. 18–19.

17 D. Hunt, "The Outsider Inside: Ammianus on the Rebellion of Silvanus," in J.-W. Drijvers and D. Hunt, eds., *The Late Roman World and its Historian: Interpreting Ammianus Marcellinus* (London, 1999), pp. 51–63.

There is much of value in Hunt's study, and his observation that the image of Silvanus in the *Res gestae* is ambivalent is accurate. But I am not sure this should be explained by reference to authorial bias and to Ammianus' personal experiences. Other explanations for the complexity of a text should be tried out before a writer is convicted of bias on the basis of his own writing.

2.2 *Forgery*

Close readers of the Silvanus episode may (perhaps already) notice additional difficulties with the version of the events presented by the narrator of the *Res gestae*. Why, after the discovery of the conspiracy against Silvanus, would Constantius appoint Dynamius to the governorship of Etruria—a man who had been convicted of the forgery of official documents and who had, by doing so, taken the empire to the brink of civil war? Dynamius' involvement in the affair cannot have been hidden after the judicial enquiry, torturing of the suspects and the confession of Eusebius (13). Furthermore, although Dynamius could allegedly send out letters in the name of Silvanus because he had obtained his signature from his references (3), how was he able to get into the possession of Malarich's signature for the final letter, written *nomine Siluani et Malarichi* (9)? Suspicious readers may notice that there is something wrong with this text.

Parallel accounts of the insurrection of Silvanus exist. Julian discussed the fall of Gallus in two panegyrics on Constantius (*Oratio* 1. 48c–49a and 3.99a–100b), written about two (*Oratio* 1) and three years (*Oratio* 3) after 354, when Silvanus was assassinated, and in his *Letter to the Athenians* (273d), published in 361. So did Aurelius Victor (42.14–6) and the author of the *Epitome de Caesaribus* (42.10); the most circumstantial narratives are provided by the fifth-century anti-Christian writer Zosimus (2.52.2–3, mistakenly associating the events with the fall of Gallus) and the Byzantine compiler Zonaras (13.9.21–24). Superficially, they seem to be in broad conformity with Ammianus. All agree that false accusations by courtiers caused Silvanus' recall and subsequent rebellion. But there is one crucial difference. None of them mentions the forged letters.

It could be argued that the parallel tradition omitted this part of the story for the sake of brevity. But Zosimus' and Zonaras' accounts are circumstantial enough to have included this noteworthy detail. Furthermore, false accusations and the fabrication of evidence are not quite the same. Consider Julian's *Letter to the Athenians*, the earliest mention of the conspiracy which led to Silvanus' fall: 'Dynamius, another sycophant, unexpectedly reported from Gaul that Silvanus was on the brink of rebellion' (273d). It is difficult to construe these words—Dynamius 'reporting' treasonable activities to Constantius

(ἤγγειλεν ὅσον οὔπω τὸν Σιλουανὸν αὐτῷ πολέμιον ἀναφανεῖσθαι)—as referring to his forging of Silvanus' letters. Though Julian, Zosimus and Zonaras also relate that Silvanus was calumniated by Dynamius, only Ammianus seems to know that Dynamius resorted to fabrication of Silvanus' letters.

In itself, the story of the parallel tradition may seem more plausible. Certainly, it would solve many of the incongruities in *Ammianus*' account if Dynamius never forged Silvanus' letters. If Dynamius had accused Silvanus of treasonable activities before the uprising (but did not resort to the fabrication of evidence), there was good reason to reward him after the event with a promotion. And whether Malarich ever received a letter from the manager of the weapon factory in Cremona or not, it would no longer be necessary to speculate on how Dynamius obtained his signature. This is disconcerting. Ammianus was in Cologne during the insurrection of Silvanus, much closer to the events than any other historian could ever hope to be. But the version of events in the parallel tradition, the most detailed of them Zonaras, writing in the twelfth century, on the face of it, seems to be much more plausible.

2.3 *Lector in Fabula*

Did Ammianus invent the story with the forged letters? Of course, no definitive answer is possible. That said, whatever happened in Cologne during the summer of 355, the effect of this motif in Ammianus' narrative deserves comment. The protagonists of the *Res gestae* seem constantly have to read forged, encoded and secret texts.[18] In no other ancient historical text, such themes figure as prominently as here. Commentators have proposed that Ammianus used such motifs so frequently because they were entertaining to readers.[19] But another effect is, I would argue, more important. We, the 'external' readers of the *Res gestae*, are continuously given the opportunity to observe how the protagonists in the *Res gestae*, the 'internal' readers, grapple with texts. Similar dynamics are at work when protagonists are described as watching an event within the narrative. Such narratological settings (what literary theorists have termed 'mise-en-abyme') have been the subject of great interest in modern literary criticism, in the field of classical literature particularly in studies of ancient narrative texts. What makes the 'mise-en-abyme' so interesting is that the reading (or viewing) practice of the protagonists can serve as model for

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18 Cf. 14.9.7, 18.6.18, 19.3.3 (see below), 20.8.18, 21.3.6, 25.8.10; 26.7.5, 27.5.1, 28.6.27, 29.1.30–29.1.35.

19 Cf. the remarks in the commentaries by G. Sabbah, *Ammien Marcellin: Histoire, vol. 2: Livres XVII–XIX* (Paris, 1970), n. 193, p. 201 and P. De Jonge, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XVIII* (Groningen, 1980), p. 202.

the interpretative efforts of the external reader. Such settings are put to startling effect in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, a work to whom Ammianus owes much,[20] and Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*, arguably written by a contemporary of Ammianus.[21] But these techniques are not restricted to the genre of the novel. As Ellen O'Gorman has argued, also in the historical works of Tacitus the reading practices of the protagonists are carefully calculated to guide the interpretive efforts of his own audience.[22] In all these cases, by constructing complex narratological settings, authors introduce a strong moment of self-reflexivity into the text and implicate the reader in the narrative.

In the Silvanus episode, the experiences of the protagonists teach us how to read. The emperor Constantius did not question the content of the forged letters. He read—and commanded (5 *lectaque ... consarcinata materia tribuni iussi sunt custodiri ...*). The consequences were fatal (1 *calamitatum turbo nouarum exstincturus simul*): another civil war threatening—and a capable and loyal general killed (32–33). We should not be so rash as the emperor. When reading the *Res gestae*, premature judgments must be avoided. This is a difficult text. Like the manager of the arms' factory, we might not understand immediately *quid significatum esset obscurius* (10). But we must not give up and believe what the author at first seems to say. Though the letter looked suspicious, the manager did not bring it to the attention of the imperial authorities, but enquired again what its author really wanted to say (10). This was the first step in the uncovering of the truth. Similarly, we have to re-read the text of the *Res gestae*, ponder upon it and enquire into its meaning.

A superficial reader of the Silvanus episode might see in it the familiar story of the war-hero overthrown by court intrigues. Malarich called him a man 'devoted to the service of the empire, trapped in the intrigues of a palace clique' (6). In the same vein, Ammianus starts the conclusion to the narrative (32): *ita dux haud exsilium meritorum hoc genere oppetit mortis metu calumnarium, quibus factione iniquorum irretitus est absens*. But this is followed up by a more ambivalent note: Silvanus had managed to defect to the winning side on the eve of the decisive battle in the civil war between Constantius and Magnentius. Certainly, as Ammianus tells us, this made it all the more tragic that it was

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20 On Apuleian 'borrowings', see G.B.A. Fletcher, "Stylistic Borrowings and Parallels in Ammianus Marcellinus," *Revue de philologie* 11 (1937), 378–395, at pp. 393–394.

21 G.W. Bowersock, *Fiction as History* (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 149–160 convincingly argues for a late-fourth-century date of Heliodorus. The collection of paper edited by R. Hunter, ed., *Studies in Heliodorus* (Cambridge, 1998) give an idea of the complex literary techniques deployed by the novelist.

22 E. O'Gorman, *Irony and Misreading in the Annals of Tacitus* (Cambridge, 2000).

Constantius' pathological distrust which brought about his death (33). But the mention of Silvanus' defection also reminds the reader that Dynamius was not the only man versed in the realities of late-antique power politics. Silvanus too knew that there were times in which a well-calculated and treasonable volte-face offered the best chances of survival—and advancement.

David Hunt has pointed to other disconcerting features of Silvanus' characterization in the *Res gestae*. His headquarters soon became alarmingly similar to Constantius' court in Milan. Silvanus fell victim to a flatterer, Ursicinus, deceiving the new fake-emperor (*imperatoris nouelli*) through the manifold fabrications of sycophancy (25 *uariis assentandi figmentis*). Officials in Milan label Silvanus a terrorist (19 *perduellem*), Ammianus in his own voice describes his regime as *tyrannis* (24). When Ammianus kissed Silvanus' purple robe as a new arrival at his headquarters in Cologne, he saw a man who was *anhelantem celsius*, an ambitious usurper, criminally striving for higher aims (27).[23]

A careful reader will realise that Silvanus can not only be seen as an innocent victim, but also as an active conspirator. This puts the rapid promotion of Dynamius in a different light. His appointment to the governorship of Etruria is directly juxtaposed with the detection of the conspiracy. The reader, apart from sharing the narrator's indignation, may ask at this point how it was possible in the circumstances that his supporters could save him from punishment, even from detection.

The distrustful reader will be rewarded for persistence. Three books and three years later (18.3, A.D. 358), the house of Barbatio, a notorious informer, was visited by a swarm of bees. His wife Assyria (perhaps more versed in astrology than in this particular form of divination) misread the omen and believed that a great future was in store for her husband. She sent him a letter, written in secret script, in which she begged him not to leave her for the empress Eusebia once he had become emperor. But Barbatio's wife was denounced, she and her husband decapitated soon after. The letter had been leaked by her maid to the notorious informer Arbitio. The maid was a cryptographer, and it was she who had written the secret letter. Barbatio and his wife had acquired her from the legacy of none other than Silvanus. For the suspicious reader, this might be the final piece of evidence. If Silvanus was innocent, an unwilling usurper, to what purpose did he acquire a cryptographer—a rare specialist and a dangerous possession in the world of denunciations and treason trials in which the governing elite of the late Roman empire lived? Was Dynamius really the author of the treasonable letters sent out in Silvanus' name? Or was it rather

23 Similar words are used at 26.6.1 for the usurper Procopius; see Hunt, "The Outsider Inside," p. 59 with notes 35, 63.

Silvanus himself preparing for an eventual coup? The acquisition of a specialist for secret scripts would no doubt be highly useful for this purpose. Like Assyria, who has encrypted the letter, the author of the coded text of the *Res gestae* discloses an alternative meaning to the alert enquirer.

If the *Res gestae* themselves cast doubt on the analysis of the Silvanus episode given by the narrator, it is not clear whether his account can be privileged over other strands in the text. Silvanus could be either the soldier innocently driven into rebellion or the cunning conspirator—the text gives hints in both directions. The sophisticated narratological setting encourages the reader to play off one version of the events against the other. But what is thus uncovered is not the historical truth behind Ammianus' biased representation, but one of many competing versions of what might actually have happened. It is for the readers to decide, those who study the text with all due care and attention, like the *magister officiorum* Florentius (12 *contemplans diligentius scripta*) whether they wish to believe the traces of obliterated text made out beneath the surface.

3 Ammianus' Failing Eyesight

> Quand [l'historien] … dit 'j'ai vu', il jette dans la balance tout le poids de son autorité, celle d'un homme qui sait voir, dire tout ce qu'il a vu et ne dire que cela: récuser cette sorte de témoignage serait mettre en doute sa capacité et son honnêteté et détruire le rapport moral, de confiance et d'estime, entre l'historien et son lecteur, sans lequel l'histoire n'est plus concevable.[24]

3.1 *The Wrinkles of Grumbates*

In A.D. 359, in Nisibis, the most important Roman garrison in northern Mesopotamia, a young Roman officer observed smoke rising in the vicinity of the town (18.6.9). Persian advance troops were quickly approaching, leaving terror and devastation behind them. Shapur II, the *shah-in-shah*, successor of the Achaemenid kings, was preparing an invasion of the Roman Orient. Ammianus Marcellinus and the other *protectores* under the command of Ursicinus only narrowly avoided the Persian cavalry. Their flight from Amida, as related by Ammianus thirty years later in Rome, has been called 'the most

24 Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin*, p. 24.

exciting escape narrative in an ancient historian'.[25] After many adventures, the unit arrived in Amida. It was an ominous place: a catastrophe was soon to happen (18.6.17). Roman scouts were waiting there for Ursicinus with a secret message from Procopius, the emperor's envoy at the Persian court (18).[26]

The Persian king, the letter indicated, would cross the rivers Anzaba and Tigris in order to strike at the heart of Roman possessions in the Orient (19). Ursicinus and his men took immediate countermeasures. Ammianus, it was decided, should be sent on a reconnaissance mission to Iovinianus, the satrap of the Persian province Corduene. He had sympathies for Rome—and was a personal friend of Ammianus (20). The journey led Ammianus through rough and mountainous territory. Upon his arrival, he was warmly received by Iovinianus. When they were alone, Ammianus revealed the reason for his coming (21 *causam praesentiae meae uni illi confessus*). The satrap provided Ammianus with a guide. He knew the region well and led Ammianus to a high and rocky mountain.

It was a truly extraordinary place. From here, it was possible, if one's eyesight was good enough, to see even the smallest objects at fifty miles' distance (21 *unde, nisi oculorum deficeret acies, ad quinquagesimum usque lapidem quoduis etiam minutissimum apparebat*). At dawn on the third day, Ammianus, accompanied only by an (unfortunately) silent companion (21 *taciturno*), saw the plain full to the horizon with Persian regiments. He clearly made out (*cernebamus*) the *shah-in-shah*, distinguished by the splendour of his scarlet dress, and on his left Grumbates, king of the Chionites, with his wrinkled limbs (*rugosis membris*).

The passage has provoked much comment: how can Ammianus claim to have seen the wrinkles of Grumbates fifty miles away? The episode has been called a 'fantasy tale', a 'hunter's tall-story' or a 'braggart's yarn'.[27] Ammianus' veracity is at stake. Desperate attempts have been made to save it. Matthews

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25 J. Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 201 with n. 125, and K. Rosen, *Studien zur Darstellungskunst und Glaubwürdigkeit des Ammianus Marcellinus* (Bonn, 1970), p. 33: 'Es gibt wohl kaum eine Stelle in der antiken Historiographie, die diese Erzählung an Dramatik übertrifft.' Improbabilities and literary precedents: Rosen, ibidem, 41–51 and F. Paschoud, " 'Se non è vero, è ben trovato': Tradition littéraire et vérité historique chez Ammien Marcellin," *Chiron* 19 (1989), 37–54, at pp. 43–45.

26 On the secret message and its meaning, see R. Blockley, "The Coded Message in Ammianus Marcellinus 18.6.17–19," *Classical Views* 30 n.s. 5 (1968), 63–65.

27 M. Büdinger, *Ammianus Marcellinus und die Eigenschaft seines Geschichtswerks* (Wien, 1895), p. 28: 'Fantasiestück'; J. Vogt, "Ammianus Marcellinus als erzählender Geschichtsschreiber der Spätzeit," *Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften und*

quotes travellers in Mesopotamia who have climbed mountains from which even longer distances can be seen; Austin had earlier made the same observation for modern Zimbabwe.[28] Guy Sabbah tinkers with the grammar of the sentence *nisi oculorum acies* . . ., which according to him is an unreal condition: 'were it not that human eyesight is deficient' (*sc*. as it unfortunately is) one could (but in reality one cannot) see the smallest objects at fifty miles' distance'.[29] Even if this were grammatically possible, in the next sentence Ammianus undeniably says that he *discerned* (*cernebamus*) the Persian king and his retinue at that distance.

The most sophisticated interpretation of this passage has been put forward by Gavin Kelly. He rightly points out that the episode cannot be seen as unproblematic autobiographical retelling of an episode in Ammianus' life, but is carefully marked out as a literary set piece. By presenting himself as a participant-observer of Shapur's invasion, Ammianus establishes his place in the distinguished series of historians involved in the events which they describe.[30] This section will follow Kelly's fine treatment in exploring the literary antecedents of this passage. At the same time, it will seek to define in greater detail the ways in which the relationship between the narrator of the *Res gestae* and his historiographical predecessors is conceptualized. Ammianus' retelling of his espionage mission in the mountains of Kurdistan is not just an attempt to establish his authority as a historian; it is also a self-conscious exploration of the means by which such authority can (or cannot) be attained.

3.2 *Testimonia neque dubia neque incerta*

The entire description of Ammianus' journey to Corduene is carefully calculated to make it clear that Ammianus was actually there and did actually see the Persian army. His extraordinary long-sightedness is introduced by the introductory remark that at fifty miles' distance, one could see even *quoduis etiam minutissimum*. In the next sentence, the implications of this are spelled out. The narrator claims that he actually made out the Persian king in his

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der Literatur 8 (1963), 800–825, at p. 823: 'Jägergeschichte'; Paschoud, " 'Se non è vero, è ben trovato'," p. 42: 'tartarinade'.

28 Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, p. 48, and N.J. Austin, "In Support of Ammianus' Veracity," *Historia* 22 (1973), 331–335, at p. 332.

29 See Sabbah, *Ammien Marcellin: Histoire*, n. 6 on pp. 11–12 and n. 198, p. 202, followed by Kelly, *Allusive Historian*, p. 82. But if Ammianus was making the general point that humans cannot see over the distance, why does the size of the objects, which can anyway not be seen, matter (*quoduis etiam minutissimum*)?

30 Kelly, *Allusive Historian*, pp. 79–88.

scarlet dress, and finally—now certainly straining the reader's credibility to its limits—the wrinkles on Grumbates' body (*rugosis membris*).

The narrator's eyewitness testimony is further underscored by the criticism of Herodotus which follows. Here, Ammianus takes on the persona of Thucydides, who attacked Herodotus as the historian of the μυθῶδες (1.22.4), the 'mythical, fictional',[31] because he did not rely on tested eyewitness testimony. Similarly, Ammianus contrasts his autopsy, supplying reliable, unassailable evidence (*testimonia neque dubia neque incerta*) with the exaggerations of Herodotus, the historian of the *fabulosum*,[32] writing about Xerxes' invasion force that it could only be counted by cramming one regiment after the other in a fixed enclosure (7.59–60).

This insistence on eyewitness testimony is remarkable. Autopsy from very early on was a problematic concept in ancient thinking about historiography, as can be seen in the methodological remarks of Thucydides and Polybius in particular.[33] How vulnerable these claims were to disbelief is shown in the frequency with which they were parodied. For instance, the narrator of Seneca's satire on the deification of Claudius, 'placing on record the proceedings in heaven October 13 … without malice or favour' (*Apocolocyntosis* 1.1), when asked about the sources of his privileged information, would refer to 'the man who saw Drusilla [the sister of Gaius with whom, it was believed, he had enjoyed incestuous relations and whom he deified after her death] translated into heaven … He is the curator of the Appian Way by which Augustus and Tiberius also went up to the gods. If you ask him, he will tell you, provided that you are alone: if there are more people around, he will be silent' (1.2–3).

An even more unreliable eyewitness is the narrator of Lucian's *Verae Historiae*. In contrast to historians, he would, though not telling the truth in anything else, claim at least to be truthful in stating that he was a liar.[34] He would defiantly refuse to base his story on autopsy or other eyewitness testimony: γράφω τοίνυν περὶ ὧν μήτε εἶδον μήτε ἔπαθον μήτε παρ᾽ ἄλλων ἐπυθόμην—'I am writing about things which I have neither seen nor experienced nor

31 Marincola, *Authority and Tradition*, pp. 117–127 explores the complex relationship between myth and historiography.

32 23 *fabulosa Graecia*. Cf. 23.6.7 and 31.4.7.

33 On Thucydides, see the final section of this paper. See Marincola, *Authority and Tradition*, pp. 72–74 on the almost 'post-modern' awareness of how eyewitness testimony could be manipulated in above all Polybius. A.D. Walker, "Enargeia and the Spectator in Greek Historiography," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 123 (1993), pp. 353–377 explores how the same problem is implicitly reflected in the narratives of Thucydides and Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

34 1.4 κἂν ἕν γὰρ δὴ τοῦτο ἀληθεύσω λέγων ὅτι ψεύδομαι.

learned from others' (1.4). This is of course a parody of Thucydides' famous statement (1.22.2, quoted in the conclusion to this chapter) that he would only rely on autopsy and carefully checked eyewitness testimony.

Lucian and Seneca show how critical ancient audiences could be of claims to autopsy and what a delicate matter such claims were. It is then all the more surprising that the narrator of the *Res gestae* should insist so strongly on his autopsy. He could simply have omitted the claim that he actually saw the Persian army, and readers would have taken his description as a simple *ecphrasis*, a literary showpiece, obeying the usual laws of rhetorical *inuentio*—it had to be plausible, illustrative and entertaining but not actually true. To quote the start of the *Apocolocyntosis* again (1.3): 'Who has ever required sworn witnesses from a historian?' But by putting so much stress on the fact that he was there and did see it, Ammianus invites just the kind of critique which Seneca and Lucian voiced. What is remarkable about the passage is thus not so much that the narrator is lying, but that he convicts himself of lying.

3.3 *Fabulosa Graecia*

Recently, there has been a debate on Ammianus' relationship with the classical Greek historians. Earlier scholarship has seen evidence for the close connection between the *Res gestae* and the Greek historiographical tradition in the narrator's self-definition as a *Graecus*, in his admiration for Greek scientific knowledge, expressed above all in the digressions of his work, and indeed in the scale of the digressions in his work in general, which cannot be paralleled in any ancient historian except Herodotus.[35] This has been challenged by Charles Fornara. He has denied that Ammianus had first-hand knowledge of Greek historiography or of Greek literature in general. From the many divergences between the *Res gestae* and the Greek sources to which they refer, he concluded that Ammianus had relied on Latin intermediary compilations instead of the Greek originals themselves, a view which has been received with approval by Gavin Kelly.[36]

It may be suggested that the depiction of Shapur's invasion to Roman Mesopotamia is a literary replay of Herodotus' description of Xerxes' crossing to Greece. How strong the Herodotean intertext of the entire passage is has not been recognized by earlier scholarship, no doubt because Herodotus is so

35 K. Rosen, *Studien zur Darstellungskunst*, pp. 85–86 with earlier scholarship; Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality*, pp. 70–71.

36 C. Fornara, "Studies in Ammianus Marcellinus II: Ammianus' Knowledge and Use of Greek and Latin Literature," *Historia* 41 (1992), 420–438, at pp. 420–427, followed by Kelly, *Allusive Historian*, p. 66 with n. 108.

heavily attacked in the passage (just as the Juvenalian intertext in Ammianus' satires on Rome has long not been recognized because the narrator there criticizes the senators for reading Juvenal).[37] Shapur's mixed army (22 *ordinum omnium multitudo sequebatur ex uicinarum gentium roboribus lecta*) is an almost precise translation of Herodotus' depiction of Xerxes' army: μετὰ δὲ τούτους ὁ σύμμικτος στρατὸς παντοίων ἐθνέων (7.55), and Ammianus' *ekphrasis* of the Persian army and its leaders condenses Herodotus' *Histories* 7.61ff., where each Persian contingent and its leaders are described. In the next paragraph, Ammianus relates how the Persians cross the river Anzaba on a pontoon bridge, sacrificing in the middle of the river. It has been pointed out that this is anachronistic both because the Anzaba is in the summer little more than a trickle, so that such a bridge would be entirely unnecessary, and because it was entirely against Zoroastrian custom to sacrifice on a bridge.[38] All these difficulties disappear if is recognized that the entire passage is a reference to Herodotus' description' of Persian burnt offerings on the bridge over the Hellespont: 7.1 *in medio pontis Anzabae hostiis caesis extisque prosperantibus* ≈ Herodotus, *Historiae* 7.54 θυμιήματα τε παντοῖα ἐπὶ τῶν γεφυρέων καταζιγόντες.

This sustained intertextuality with Herodotus sharply subverts Ammianus' criticism of Herodotus' fairytales of ancient Greece (*fabulosa Graecia*). To what extent can the narrator claim the superiority of his eyewitness testimony to Herodotus when his depiction of the Persian invasion force is actually taken from the passage which he so heavily criticizes? How much less *fabulosum* are the countless regiments (*agmina*) of Shapur's army, which the narrator claims to have seen, than the regiments of Xerxes' army in Herodotus, which were, after all, able to be counted separately in a fixed enclosure (23 *agminatim* ≈ Herodotus, *Historiae* 7.59–60)?

3.4 *The Lonely Historian*

The narrator concludes this passage by a sweeping reassertion of the value of his eyewitness testimony: *cum nos* (*sc.* in contrast to *fabulosa Graecia*) *cauti uel, ut uerius dixerim, timidi nihil exaggeremus praeter ea, quae fidei testimonia neque dubia neque incerta monstrarunt*—a cautious, no, to tell the truth, a timid historian (23). Is the narrator also as precise in matters of historical truth as he is when it comes to finding the most accurate word for self-praise?

37 See R. Rees, "Ammianus Satiricus," in Drijvers and Hunt, eds., *The Late Roman World*, pp. 141–155. But note the skeptical remarks by D. Den Hengst, "Literary Aspects of Ammianus' Second Digression on Rome," in den Boeft, Drijvers, den Hengst and Teitler, eds., *Ammianus after Julian*, pp. 159–177.

38 Rosen, *Studien zur Darstellungskunst*, p. 45 with older scholarship.

It is difficult not to think of how *dubia* and *incerta* Ammianus' *testimonia* in fact are. On re-reading the sentence, instead of translating 'we do not exaggerate anything beyond what is guaranteed by reliable, unassailable evidence' we might actually want to read 'we do not exaggerate anything *except* what (eyewitness) testimony has shown'.[39] How much more reliable as a witness is the lonely historian Ammianus than the sole witness for Claudius' deification presented in the *Apocolocyntosis*, the curator of the Appian road, who will only speak about events if you are alone?[40]

The readers could scarcely be pointed more directly to the inadequacies of this eyewitness testimony than by the repeated assertions of its veracity. Ammianus' remarkable long-sightedness in Corduene directly confronts the readers with the unreliability of eyewitness testimony. His approach to it owes more to the treatments of historiographical truth claims in the parodies of Seneca and Lucian. The dramatic illusion is broken, the traces of the historian's *inuentio* are all too visible. The reader is prevented from accepting the historian's account without reflecting upon the difficulties of its production. In the end, we are left to wonder what Ammianus' silent companion (21 *taciturno*) would say if he could describe what they had seen when they stood alone on that mountain in Corduene.

4 Clio and the Romance

4.1 *Love and Treason in Nisibis*

Not long after Ammianus' return to the Roman province, the grain fields in Roman Mesopotamia were set on fire. The order was given by the Roman authorities. Scorched-earth tactics were intended to prevent the advance of the Persian enemy. But Shapur with his vast army was quickly advancing through the Roman province (18.7). His chief adviser was Antoninus, an ex-businessman, high-ranking Roman bureaucrat and former officer of the Roman imperial army. Intrigues within the Roman imperial administration had forced him to defect to the Persians, accompanied by his entire family (18.4). Antoninus recommended that Shapur not take the direct march west towards Roman heartland, but rather to turn north towards Amida, modern Diyabakir, the

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39 Thus Kelly, *Allusive Historian*, p. 86. On the ambiguous meaning of *praeter*, see De Jonge, *Philological and Historical Commentary*, p. 222.

40 1.3 *hunc si interrogaueris, soli narrabit. Coram pluribus numquam uerbum faciet* (with pun on *uerba dare* 'deceive'). Ammianus, incidentally, had also only spoken to Jovinianus about his mission (21 *uni illi*).

key fortress in the north of the province Mesopotamia (18.7.10). In the vicinity of Amida, Ammianus Marcellinus was caught in a surprise attack and barely saved his life (18.8). Ammianus then gives a depiction of Amida and its defences (18.9), introducing the narrative of the siege itself, which will take up the first half of book 19 (19.1–8). But, at the end of book 18, the continuation of the military narrative is delayed (18.10):

> As he [Sapor] approached the two Roman fortresses Reman and Busan he was informed by some deserters that many people had removed their treasure to these places, believing that it would be safe within their high walls. He was told too that he would find there with valuable chattels a woman of great beauty with her little daughter; she was the wife of a certain Craugasius of Nisbis (*Craugasii Nisibeni cuiusdam uxorem*), whose birth, reputation and influence had won him great respect among the grandees of that town.

The fortresses put up no resistance and surrendered immediately. Craugasius' wife was led before the Great King (10.3–4):

> The king … ordered that she should be allowed to approach him without fear, though she expected that she would be offered violence. Her face was covered with a black veil that left only her mouth exposed, and when the king saw her he gave her a courteous assurance that she might hope to be reunited with her husband and that her honour should remain unspotted. Hearing that her husband loved her passionately, he thought he could use her to purchase the betrayal of Nisibis.

The capture of Craugasius' wife concludes the eighteenth book of the *Res gestae*. The beginning of the nineteenth book is taken up by Shapur's siege of Amida. Immediately after the fall of the city and the deaths of many of his comrades, readers hear of the further fate of Craugasius' wife. While Roman defenders were massacred, she had different preoccupations (19.9.3):

> But the wife of Craugasius, though no attempt was made on her virtue and she was treated with the respect due to a married woman of rank, was in despair at the thought of seeing another country without her husband, though present indications gave her hope of a better lot. Thinking of her own interests (*in rem consulens suam*) and foreseeing what would happen, she was a prey to anxiety on two counts; separation from her husband and a second marriage were equally hateful to her.

She sent a trusted servant to her beloved, telling him of her survival and urging him to join her in Persia. The messenger sneaked through the Roman lines and safely arrived in Nisibis. Pretending in public that he did not know anything about the fate of his mistress and that she was probably dead, he secretly conveyed to Craugasius the words of his wife. Craugasius promised that he would rejoin her at the first opportunity. The messenger clandestinely left Nisibis, travelled back over the border and reported the good news to Craugasius' wife. The satrap Tamsapor, on the orders of the Great King, assured that he would take her husband under his protection when an opportunity arose. He had already done the same for Antoninus (18.4.3).

The unexpected departure of Craugasius' servant aroused suspicions in Nisibis. Craugasius, fearing that the truth about his wife's survival and his impending treason would emerge, made arrangements for a second marriage with a high-born girl from Nisibis. But eventually, just before this unwanted wedding he was able to escape:

> On the pretext of making preparations for the wedding-feast he went to a house in the country eight miles from Nisibis; then he set spurs to his horse and galloped off to join a band of Persian marauders whom he knew to be in the neighbourhood. They received him with open arms, and when he told them who he was delivered him five days later to Tamsapor, who presented him to the king. He recovered his property and all his family as well as his wife, whom he had lost a few months before (*quam paucos post menses amiserat*), and he enjoyed a position second only to Antoninus, though in the words of the famous poet, 'he came in a bad second' (*longo proximus interuallo*, cf. Vergil, *Aeneis* 5.320) . . . These events occurred not long after the fall of Amida.

The section is followed by a short conclusion to the siege of Amida in which the Roman and Persian losses are counted and in which the strategic importance of the siege is discussed (19.9.9).

4.2 *The Question of Genre*

Critics have shown a remarkable eagerness to ground the story of Craugasius in the biography of Ammianus. Already Edward Thompson had assumed that Ammianus 'was almost certainly a friend of Craugasius of Nisibis . . . and of his wife—how else can we explain his narration at such disproportionate length of the story of their fortunes?'[41] Guy Sabbah, in the latest analysis of the

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41 Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus*, p. 2.

episode, suggests that the narrative reflected the romantic feelings of the 'artist as a young man', when he was a soldier in Mesopotamia in A.D. 359/60, 'jeune homme, sensible à l'aventure et à l'amour'.[42] These biographical interpretations are perhaps surprising in view of the thick literary texture of the episode.

Commentators generally describe the narrative of Craugasius and his wife as a 'tale' or as a 'novella'.[43] The fate of Craugasius and his wife is right from the start situated in fictional space by the indefinite pronoun *cuiusdam*. It is a surprising choice (as the standard commentary remarks) for a man of Antoninus' social standing, but standardly employed at the start of narrative fiction to mark the following events as happening 'once upon time'.[44] If the generic affiliations of the episode are examined more closely, it becomes clear that it is possible to be more precise. The protagonists are a loving couple of high birth and exceptional beauty; they are separated either before or after their marriage; the heroine falls into the hands of an oriental potentate; despite the threat the situation poses, her chastity is preserved; secret messages are exchanged; a second, unwanted marriage threatens; but eventually, the couple is reunited for the happy end: the common occurrence of all these traits links the Craugasius narrative specifically to the Greek romantic novel.

This intertext is surprising. In contrast to history, whose prime requirement was truthfulness (as stated both in ancient theoretical discussions of the genre and in programmatic statements in the works themselves) the novel was regarded as the mendacious genre *par excellence*.[45] The emperor Julian, often seen as the 'hero' of Ammianus' work, advised his priests in a 'pastoral letter' to read fact-based (ἐπὶ πεποιημένοις τοῖς ἔργοις) history and to avoid the πλάσματα, 'fictions, lies' of romantic novels (*Epist.* 89a, ed. Joseph Bidez, 301B).[46] Similarly, Macrobius, in a theoretical analysis of different types of fiction in the

42 Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin*, pp. 94–95.

43 Rosen, *Studien zur Darstellungskunst*, p. 50; W. Seyfarth, *Ammianus Marcellinus: Römische Geschichte II* (Berlin, 1968), p. 190, n. 88; G. Sabbah, "Présences féminines dans l'histoire d'Ammien Marcellin: Les rôles politiques," in J. Den Boeft, D. den Hengst and H.C. Teitler, eds., *Cognitio Gestorum: The Historiographic Art of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Amsterdam, 1992), pp. 91–105, at p. 94.

44 Cf. Petronius, *Satyricon* 111.1 *matrona quaedam Ephesi tam notae erat pudicitiae; Historia Apollonii regis Tyri* 1.1 *rex fuit quidam nomine Antiochus*; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 1.7 *tandem evado … ad quandam cauponam Meroen*; 2.12 *Cerdo quidam nomine*; 13 *Chaldaeus quidam hospes* and *passim* and 4.28.1 *erant in quadam ciuitate rex et regina*.

45 For the low esteem of the genre, see also Persius 1.134 and Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Vita *Clodii Albini* 12.12.

46 Cf. LSJ s.v. πλάσμα II.

preface to his commentary to Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*,[47] dismissed romantic novels, *argumenta fictis casibus amatorum referta*, as the Latin equivalent of πλάσματα: *fabulae*. Untrustworthy fiction—*quarum nomen indicat falsi professionem*, was to be relegated to childrens' nurseries—*in nutricum cunas* (*Commentariorum in Somnium Scipionis*, 1.2.8).

At first sight, in view of such statements it is remarkable that a historian writing in the classical tradition, as Ammianus undoubtedly was, should include a piece which is so strongly reminiscent of the Greek romance. This was another potential threat to his trustworthiness as a historian. The opposition between the 'novelistic' and the historical is still a commonplace in modern debates on the status of historiography. For example, exponents of the *Annales* school denounced traditional narrative history as 'novelistic' in contrast to the new 'scientific' history they were determined to create.[48] This may explain why some critics have insisted so much on the biographical reality of the episode. If Ammianus included the Craugasius narrative in his work because he was a personal friend of his or because he heard of it when he was a lovelorn young soldier, this forestalls the potentially unsettling question of why a serious historian included a romantic novella in his work.

An alternative to this biographical approach is possible. It can be argued that the effect of the novel of Craugasius is comparable to the account of Ammianus watching the Persian army in Corduene, discussed in the preceding section. The inclusion of an overtly fictional narrative destabilizes the status of the *Res gestae* as a work claiming uncontestably to belong to the genre of truth—to be an *opus ueritatem professum* (31.16.9), as Ammianus puts it in the *sphragis* to his work. Again, the text does not conceal the creative manipulations of the author. It bears the marks of its own composition. The reader is confronted with the inherent fictional component of any historical text. The contract between authoritative historian and trustful reader is disrupted. The reader cannot remain an unthinking believer of a true, monolithic text, but rather is forced to engage creatively in the interpretative process. The reader, and not the all-present author of biographical interpretations, will therefore stand in the centre of the following reading of the episode.

47 For the date of Macrobius, see now Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 231–272.

48 See H. White, "The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory," *History and Theory* 23.1 (1984), 1–33 for an assessment of the debate.

4.3 *The Two Deaths of Craugasius' Wife*

Since Léon Dautremer, who in 1903 published a short piece on the novella of Craugasius and his wife, interpreters have generally seen it as a romantic tale without a political subtext.[49] Pointing out that Ammianus does not explicitly pass a negative judgment on Craugasius' treason, they have seen the historian as sympathetic to the couple's change of sides. Both Dautremer and Sabbah thus interpreted the piece as a celebration of love and marriage. On the face of it, this seems to fit well with the novelistic intertext. The main theme of the Greek novels is the preservation of the chastity of the protagonists, particularly the female one, and the plot always ends with the couple living happily ever after in the form of legitimate marriage. Kate Cooper thus sees the Greek novels as a reflection of the concerns of municipal elites with legitimate offspring on which the survival of the civic elites and thus also the survival of the empire as a whole depended: 'the narrative of adolescent love serves … quite literally to remind the curial families that the empire depends on their fertility.'[50] The underlying ideology is perhaps most clearly reflected in Menander Rhetor's advice to prospective speakers at weddings to celebrate, 'that the advantage of marriage lies in concord in the household and preservation and increase of wealth, and, most important, in the procreation of children to follow on in the family, to be benefactors of their country, to organize festivals'.[51] The novella of Craugasius and his wife could thus be seen as a reassertion of traditional civic and patriotic values, whose cornerstone was legitimate marriage.

However, a less optimistic reading of the Craugasius episode is possible. Put into the historical context of books 18 and 19, the novelistic plot is in danger of loosing its innocence. The first part of the novella is inserted after the description of Amida but immediately before the start of the siege itself. Similarly, the second segment follows the depiction of the fall of the city, but Ammianus' concluding remarks to the siege follow only *after* the end of the Craugasius story. Both narratives are thus deeply intertwined; the Craugasius story is both framed by the siege of Amida and itself serves as a frame to it.

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49 L. Dautremer, "Une anecdote tirée d'Ammien Marcellin," in *Mélanges Boissier* (Paris, 1903), 157–160, at p. 159; Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus*, p. 2; Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus Marcellinus*, p. 347; Sabbah, "Présences féminines," pp. 94–95.

50 K. Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride* (Harvard, MA, 1996), p. 43.

51 411.15–18, in the translation of D.A. Russell and N.G. Wilson (Oxford, 1981).

18.9	Description of Amida
18.10	Craugasius and his wife, part one
19.1–8	Siege and fall of Amida
19.9.1–2	Capture and execution of Roman defenders
19.9.3–8	Craugasius and his wife, part two
19.9.9	Conclusion to the siege of Amida

The effect is sharp contrast between the violence of the siege and the concerns of the lovers in the novel. Immediately before Craugasius' wife was presented to the Great King, the reader has heard of women 'who are dragged out stupefied with fear and with their children clinging to them; even at their tender age they were fated to experience the bitterness of grief' (18.10.2). Even harsher is the contrast between Craugasius' wife in 19.9.3, who 'though no attempt is made on her virtue … thinks of her own interest' (*in rem consulens suam*) and the aftermath of the fall of Amida in 19.9.1–2:

> Amid the scenes of death and pillage which marked the destruction of the city, the *comes* Aelianus and the officers who had for so long maintained the defence of our walls and inflicted such losses on the Persians suffered an abominable death on the gibbet. Jacobus and Caesius, paymasters on the staff of the *magistri equitum* and other *protectores* were led into captivity with their hands tied behind their backs. Those who had come from across the Tigris were hunted down with particular care and slaughtered to a man, high and low alike.

Ammianus was an eyewitness of these events—he could only narrowly escape by night at the fall of the city, and the *protectores* who were taken prisoner were his comrades (18.8). Craugasius committed treason in a lethal war against a dangerous enemy.

However, the opinion of the narrator on Craugasius' change of sides is not explicit. The optimistic reading of the novella can thus not be excluded. The text provides the reader with material for both interpretations. The ambiguity is epitomized by the final sentence of the episode (19.9.7):

> … Tamsapori post diem traditur quintum perque eum regi oblatus opibus et necessitudine omni recuperata cum coniuge, quam paucos post menses amiserat, erat[52] secundi loci post Antoninum, ut ait poeta praeclarus 'longo proximus intervallo.

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52 amisit *V*, amisit erat *Valesius*, amiserat, erat *Heraeus*, euasit, sed *post* Antoninum *add. Novák*.

The relative clause can either be translated 'whom he lost a few months later', with pluperfect standing for perfect, or 'whom he had lost a few months before', with *post* in the sense of *ex* or *per*.[53] Translators are evenly divided, and both interpretations are possible.[54] The choice of the readers will depend on their view of the preceding episode. If the novella is read as a romance with a happy ending, the second translation is more apt. The relative clause then simply refers back to the time when Craugasius was separated from his wife, thus emphasizing their present bliss. The first translation allows a more cynical reading. After Craugasius' wife has brought about the treason of her husband, she can now be summarily disposed of in a subordinate clause.

At the end of the story, Craugasius as traitor at the court of the Great King is all that remains. Looking back, the romantic story appears as a charade masking the ugly realities of politics. Such a reading is supported by the last mention of Craugasius in book 20. When the narrative returns to the Persian war, no further mention is made of this romantic story and Craugasius' wife. The reader only hears that Craugasius' treason doubled the determination of Shapur, *truculentus rex ille Persarum*, to conquer Mesopotamia (6.1 *incentiuo Antonini aduentu Craugasii duplicato ardore obtinendae Mesopotamiae flagrans*).

Still, the ambiguity between the two interpretations—of both the final sentence and the entire episode—is real. Readers are not presented with a prefabricated solution but are rather forced to draw their own conclusions from the hints given in the text. The contradiction between novel and history, between love story and the surrounding treason and violence, makes it difficult for the reader to disengage from the interpretative process. Even more, the interpretative space, destabilized by the generic contradiction between history and novel, positively demands the involvement of the reader. This is clearly (and perhaps ironically) shown by modern responses to the episode. Interpreters could only resolve its tensions by historizing it, grounding it in Ammianus' biography. This is certainly possible, but the strong literary texture of the novella makes such a simple solution problematic. Rather, the fictionalization of the episode requires readers, who do not depend on the authority of

53 *amiserat, erat* is an almost certain restoration (haplology). Valesius conjectured *amisit* to eliminate the ambiguity of *amiserat*. I believe this to be mistaken, as should become clear from the discussion which follows.

54 Ambiguity recognized by Sabbah, *La méthode d'Ammien Marcellin*, p. 94. 'Before': De Jonge, *Philological and Historical Commentary, ad loc.*, Hamilton, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, ad loc., G. Sabbah, *Ammien Marcellin. Histoires. Vol. 2: Livres XVII–XIX* (Paris, 1970), ad loc.; 'After': J.C. Rolfe, *Ammianus Marcellinus. Volume I* (Cambridge, Mass., 1935), ad loc.; W. Seyfarth, *Ammianus Marcellinus. Römische Geschichte* (Berlin, 1968), ad loc.

the historian, but are ready to trace the contradictions of the narrative in order to construct their own version of this history.

5 Conclusion: The Sceptical Historian

5.1 *Unreliable Witness*

In this paper, I have tried to approach the problem of perceived inconsistencies in Ammianus' narrative from a new perspective. To this end, I have offered close readings of three passages.

In the first section I sought to obtain a better understanding of the Silvanus episode by looking at the reading practices imposed by the text upon its attentive reader. Once its sophisticated narratological setting is recognized, it becomes clear that the text itself deliberately fails to conceal its own inconsistencies. The Silvanus episode does not suppress, but rather seems actively to promote, a version of the events alternative and sometimes starkly contradictory to that authorized by the narrator. This suggests that the complex inconcinnities of Ammianus' account should perhaps not be too swiftly explained away by an appeal to authorial bias or an inability to make divergent sources cohere. Rather, Ammianus' treatment of the Silvanus episode forces readers to engage in the interpretative process by questioning the account of the narrator and in so doing to construct their own history—to such an extent that they are allowed to ask whether the forged letters were not faked by Silvanus, but, in fact, by the narrator of the *Res gestae* himself.

This undermining of the narrator's account is all the more remarkable since Ammianus was an eyewitness to at least part of the events described. The passage discussed in section two poses the problem in an even more immediate form. The narrator's continued insistence that he was really there and did actually see the Persian king in his scarlet dress and Grumbates with his wrinkled limbs is difficult to take seriously. The position of the narrator is further undermined by his simultaneous attack on (and adoption of) Herodotus' historical practice. Again the reader is inescapably confronted with the limits of autopsy and is forced to question the credibility of the narrator as a reliable witness.

In the narrative of Craugasius' wife readers witnessed a *mésalliance* of Clio, the Muse of History, and the romantic novel. Both genres are continuously played off against one another. In the end, it is left to the reader to decide which narrative to choose: the happy reunion of a loving couple—or treason in the face of a ruthless enemy. The ambivalence is artfully maintained until the very last sentence. As in the Silvanus and Corduene episodes, here again the *Res gestae* do not present readers with ready-made facts and interpretations, but

force them to participate in the process of historical investigation and to construct their own (equally unstable and uncertain) versions of historical truth.

These three episodes call attention to just how deceptive the smooth flow of finished historical narratives can be, narratives which attempt to mask the processes which lie behind their composition. This seems particularly remarkable because in each of these cases, Ammianus was an eyewitness to the events described. Incongruities here impact directly on Ammianus' authority as a truthful reporter and good historian. But here, in particular, the methodological manipulations of the historian are paraded rather than concealed. The historian could point scarcely more clearly to the problems involved in the very writing of history.

5.2 *The Thucydidean Tradition*

How to conceptualize the connection between the literary form of the *Res gestae* and the social environment in which it was written? In conclusion, I would like to suggest two contexts in which Ammianus' distinctive historical technique may profitably be situated. The first is the competitive setting of ancient literary performance. By displaying his knowledge of the pitfalls faced by historians in the reconstruction of the past, Ammianus asserts his superiority over less methodologically conscious practitioners of the genre.

Such epistemological scepticism has a long tradition in ancient historical discourse. Already Thucydides advertized his awareness of the limits placed on the historian's craft by the frailty of the human sensory apparatus. In the proem to his history of the Peloponnesian War, he points out that eyewitness testimony (although more reliable than other forms of evidence) is inevitably distorted by bias and the weakness of human memory. Remarkably, this even applies to his own recollections of events at which he himself participated (1.22.2–3):

> I decided to write down the events of the war not as I heard them from others, nor as they appeared to me. Rather, I carefully cross-checked all testimonies, both those of events at which I participated myself and those of which I heard from others, as best as I could. This could only be done with great difficulty, because participants at the same events never give the same depictions of them, but (re-tell them) according to their memory and their sympathies.

According to Thucydides, any eyewitness testimony (including his own) is intrinsically unreliable. As a result, in order to reach an approximation of the truth, a historian always ought to compare different accounts of the same

events with each other, 'as best as he can' (ὅσον δυνατὸν). By advertizing his epistemological scepticism, Thucydides asserts his superiority over less methodologically conscious predecessors, above all Herodotus.

As has been seen in Section Three above, when criticizing Herodotus' historical technique, Ammianus takes on a deliberately Thucydidean persona. Even more significantly, the methodological remarks which open Book XV of the *Res gestae* are an almost word-for-word translation of the preface to the history of the Peloponnesian War (15.1.1 *Utcumque potui ueritatem scrutari, eq, quae uidere licuit per aetatem uel perplexe interrogando uersatos in medio scire* … ≈ 1.22.2 οὐκ ἐκ τοῦ παρατυχόντος πυνθανόμενος ἠξίωσα γράφειν οὐδ᾽ ὡς ἐμοὶ ἐδόκει, ἀλλ᾽ οἷς τε αὐτὸς παρῆν καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσον δυνατὸν ἀκριβείᾳ περὶ ἑκάστου ἐπεξελθών). These references are designed to establish Ammianus' credentials as an epistemologically sceptical historian in the Thucydidean tradition. I would like to suggest that the self-reflexivity displayed in his narrative serves the same purpose. By making visible the problems faced by him in the reconstruction of past events, Ammianus does not undermine, but enhance his authority as a reliable guide to the history of his own time.

5.3 *Literature and Society*

Lastly, I should like to propose a second social context in which Ammianus' literary technique may be profitably situated: the political culture of the Roman monarchy. In important ways, Ammianus' literary techniques resemble that of Cassius Dio, as discussed by Gleason in her recent article on the early-third century imperial historian.[55] Of the episodes discussed in this paper, the forging of Silvanus' letters recalls the stories of 'identity theft' discussed at length in Gleason's paper, and Craugasius' flight to Persia is reminiscent of two stories in Dio's narrative of Commodus' reign (73 [72].14.1–3 and 78 [77].19.1–2), in which high-ranking Romans give up their civic identities to escape to Parthian territory. Gleason suggests that these narratives dramatize anxieties about the stability of personal identity, generated by the high frequency of régime change and the emergence of new patterns of social mobility amongst the imperial aristocracy of the Severan period.

Gleason's reading of Dio offers an interpretive model to make sense of the relationship between socio-political transformations and the literary texture of Ammianus' narrative. The political environment of the late fourth century was even more volatile than that of the early third. In the period from 354 (the first time Ammianus appears in the extant part of his history) to 389 (the date at which the first instalment of his work may have been published),

55 Gleason, "Identity Theft."

there were no less than five imperial usurpations and civil wars. As *protector domesticus*, member of a élite unit of the Roman army, Ammianus formed part of the imperial aristocracy of the Roman Empire. For men like him, any shift in the configuration of power at court had potentially far-reaching repercussions. Those who managed to successfully navigate the risks of high politics enjoyed spectacular opportunities—three of Ammianus' comrades as *protectores domestici* became emperors during his lifetime.[56] By contrast, those who supported the wrong side in a civil conflict might face dismissal, persecution and loss of life—destinies all too familiar to readers of the *Res gestae*.

But for members of the imperial aristocracy like Ammianus, the instability of the Roman monarchy not only meant that their lives, honour and properties were continuously at risk. The frequent changes of rulers also posed difficult cognitive challenges. Each proclamation of an emperor, and each imperial defeat, was accompanied by a re-organization of public memory in the large urban centres of the Roman Empire. The urban squares in late-antique cities were filled with statuary representing the current emperors, their predecessors and high officials. Made of bronze and marble, these statues symbolized the eternal rulership and lasting glory of the ruling dynasty and its followers. However, during civil wars, these (supposedly permanent) monuments were thrown from their pedestals and defaced. Frequently, they were then reused for other statues, put up for followers of the new régime. Such events—frequently recurring during Ammianus' lifetime, and no doubt often witnessed by him—were unsettling reminders of the fact that even seemingly authoritative representations of recent history could always be erased and recreated.[57] The literary texture of the *Res gestae* may be seen as an attempt to find an suitable language to describe this volatile political world. Like visitors to the public spaces of late-antique metropoleis, Ammianus' readers are presented with an image of fourth-century history which is always provisional, a work in progress, a construction site whose appearance might suddenly (and radically) change.

56 As noted by Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality*, p. 63.

57 On the late-antique statuary habit in general, see P. Stewart, "The Destruction of Statues in Late Antiquity," in R. Miles, ed., *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity* (London, 1999), pp. 159–189; J. Elsner, "Iconoclasm and the Preservation of Memory," in R. Nelson and M. Olin, eds., *Monuments and Memory, Made and Unmade* (Chicago, 2003), pp. 209–231; and F.A. Bauer and C. Witschel, *Statuen in der Spätantike* (Wiesbaden, 2007). On the statuary environment of Rome, where Ammianus' history was written, see J. Weisweiler, "From Equality to Asymmetry: Honorific Statues, Imperial Power and Senatorial Identity in Late-Antique Rome," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 25 (2012), 319–350.

Of course, in every society, the past is constantly re-used and re-created for the purposes of the present. However, the distinctive shape of Roman visual culture (built around discrete and easily destructible ruler images) and the instability of the imperial monarchy (which had a much higher incidence of changes of rulers than comparable historical formations)[58] made the malleability of history exceptionally visible in the Roman World. Like Dio's concern with the instability of personal identities, so also Ammianus' interest in the plasticity of the past may be taken as a response to the problems of representation generated by the distinctive political and visual culture of the late Roman monarchy. The disjointed, multi-perspectival narrative of the *Res gestae* was an appropriate literary form to describe a social world in which images of both present and past were constantly shifting.

58 On usurpations in the Late Roman World in general, see J. Szidat, *Usurpator tanti nominis: Kaiser und Usurpator in der Spätantike (337–476 n. Chr.)* (Stuttgart, 2010). W. Scheidel, "The Roman Emperor in the Wider World," lecture given at the Triennial Conference, Cambridge 26 July 2011 (podcast available on http://www.classics.cam.ac.uk/faculty/seminars_conferences/triennial_conference_plenary/), offers a powerful quantitative demonstration that the Roman monarchy was considerably more unstable than other historically-attested autocracies.

CHAPTER 8

A Living Relic for the Vicar of Rome: Strategies of Visualization in a Civil Case

*Sigrid Mratschek**

1 Introduction

The correspondence of Paulinus of Nola provides an insight into how the power of words, through the clash of Christian discourses with classical forms of communication, evolved as a creative and successful mode of exercising authority.[1] According to his biographer Uranius, Paulinus' letter-writing was as effective in exerting influence as the generosity of his alms-giving.[2] Writing letters of recommendation (*commendationes*), which was among the principal duties of a bishop and Roman patron, here played a major role. In practice, the recommendations definitely attributable to Paulinus show him combining the position of a *nobilis* with that of the ascetic, whose beneficence enjoyed a kind of supernatural authority.[3]

2 Exordium: A Recommendation blending Function with Spirituality

Epistula 49, Paulinus' most interesting petition from both a juridical and historical point of view, concerns the theft of a stranded ship and of its cargo destined

* Warm thanks are due to all the participants in the Ghent—Bruxelles workshop for their stimulating comments and lively discussions.

1 S.J. Tambiah, "The Magical Power of Words," *Man* 3 (1968), 175–208 on the 'dimension of performativity'. I here cite the letters and poems of Paulinus of Nola in the line-numbering of the second edition of W. von Hartel and M. Kamptner, which has indices and addenda, CSEL 29 and 30 (Wien, 1999), and from P.G. Walsh, trans. and ann., *Letters of St. Paulinus of Nola*, 2 vols. (New York, 1966–1967).

2 Uranius, *Epist. 'De obitu Sancti Paulini'* 9, *PL* 53: 864: *Alios epistolis, alios sumptibus adiuvabat.*

3 As has been shown by P. Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971), 80–101, at p. 93. On practices followed in letters of recommendation, see S. Mratschek, *Der Briefwechsel des Paulinus von Nola: Kommunikation und soziale Kontakte zwischen christlichen Intellektuellen* (Göttingen, 2002), pp. 358–388: "*Dignam enim interventu vestro causam*: Empfehlungsschreiben und Petitionen".

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for the imperial granaries. Its aim was to obtain restoration and compensation for the ship-owner, who happened to be Paulinus' friend. The addressee was the *vicarius praefectorum in urbe Roma*, the second highest administrative official of Italy, whose name may have been Macarius.[4] He was responsible for the diocese of Italia suburbicaria, and represented the highest judicial instance in Central and Southern Italy under the praetorian prefect. Paulinus' request was not, however, an edited version of an official petition that was submitted by the aggrieved party in the court (*urbana sedes*) shared by the urban prefect and the *vicarius urbis*, in the presence of the *praefectus annonae*;[5] this was a private initiative. The request, filling an entire scroll, reveals how the innovation of adapting the classical letter of recommendation made it possible to develop successful opinion-moulding strategies in the context of a civil lawsuit, or indeed as an alternative to litigation.

Litterae commendaticiae by their nature would establish a complex social relationship involving three participants: the petition's object (here the ship-owner, Secundinianus), its author (Paulinus), and its recipient (the vicar of Rome, Macarius). The interaction involving these three determined the outcome of the recommendation. In this case, Paulinus' letter had been designed specifically with its addressee in mind. It was for Macarius, a 'like-minded Christian' and an educated *vir spectabilis*, that Paulinus wrapped his petition in a miracle-tale, with the aim of persuading the vicar to intervene in the law case. The tale's central theme was therefore not the theft of the ship and its cargo, but the *opera Dei*. The action brought by the ship-owner—the *causa Secundiniani*—took on the character of a revelation granted by the *deus salvator*, a spectacle of divine action that Paulinus invited the vicar of Rome to behold: *vide enim … admirabile … opus* (49.1, p. 390, 17). The ship-owner, a

4 He may not have been named Macarius and may not have been a *vicarius urbis*. The *superscriptio* 'Macario Paulinus' appears in the Codex Parisinus 2122 ('O') from the late 9th century as an addition by a second hand, see Hartel, ed., CSEL 29, p. 390: *m. 2: Paullini epistula ad Macarium*. Cf. Praefatio XIV and XXIII, P. Fabre, *Essai sur la chronologie de l'œuvre de Saint Paulin de Nole* (Paris, 1948), pp. 5, 86–87 and C. Conybeare, *Paulinus Noster: Self and Symbols in the Letters of Paulinus of Nola* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 161–165. But there is also evidence favouring the view that Macarius was the vicar of Rome. Such claims for damages were indeed the responsibility of the vicar (*vicarius*) of Rome; and as the immediate superior of the provincial governors in Central and Southern Italy he represented the next higher court of appeal. It was a Macarius, moreover, who was documented ten years later in Palladius as an ex-vicar (see note 95). The later characterization of Paulinus (*Epist.* 49.12, p. 400, 2–7) also suggests a high-ranking official.

5 Cf. e.g. Symmachus, *Relationes* 23.4, ed. O. Seeck (Berlin, 1961), p. 297: *libello dato*. See R.H. Barrow, *Prefect and Emperor: The Relationes of Symmachus A.D. 384* (Oxford, 1973), p. 126, n. 6.

Christian himself and a friend of bishop Paulinus,[6] completed the triangular relationship.

But what were the intentions that underlay this interaction of functionality and spirituality?[7] In writing his recommendation, Paulinus had two aims: legal redress for the ship-owner and circulating knowledge of the event to the wider public. This is openly avowed right from the outset, in the proemium of his letter to the vicar, which in form and elaboration amounts to an artificial letter, and in length is equal to a *libellus*:[8] "It is honourable to confess the works of the Lord. This is my reason for writing this letter, because the affairs of Secundinianus, the paterfamilias whom I am introducing to your dear person through this letter, cannot be related without giving glory and praise to the Lord."[9] The pragmatic aspect was thus certainly not "of secondary importance",[10] but in fact, as the text shows, very much bound up with the *praedicatio dei*. Paulinus did not doubt that his narrative of adventure and miraculous intervention (49.15, p. 403), packaged in his letter to the vicar of Rome, would with the latter's help find an interested public in the higher echelons of Roman society.

3 Narratio: A Shipwreck off Sardinia

The structural model for the *commendatio* is the plea advanced by a barrister for his client, with *exordium* or *prooemium* (introduction), *narratio* (the facts of the

6 Paulinus of Nola, *Epist*. 49.1, p. 390, 20: *vir in Christo fidelis, amicus* and *frater noster*. 49.14, p. 401, 26: *pastor exigui gregis*.

7 The stimulus for this question comes in part from S. Mussfeldt, "Bleibende Fragen: Zu Adressat und Datierung von Epistel 49 des Paulinus von Nola," *Hermes* 135 (2007), 206-2015, at pp. 206–207, esp. n. 4—Mussfeldt calls this problem a 'terra incognita'—and also from the brief outline in the context of the Felix cult by D. Trout, *Paulinus of Nola: Life, Letters and Poems* (Berkeley, 1999), pp. 189–191. For valuable references illuminating the legal background to the affair I am indebted to Boudewijn Sirks (Oxford) and Detlef Liebs (Freiburg im Breisgau); for full documentation of the legal background, see Mratschek, *Der Briefwechsel des Paulinus*, pp. 374–388.

8 In Hartel's and Kamptner's CSEL edition, *Epist*. 49 takes up 14 printed pages! On calculating the average length of a papyrus roll, approximately equal to that of a *libellus* of Paulinus, see S. Mratschek, "Einblicke in einen Postsack: Zur Struktur und Edition der 'Natalicia' des Paulinus von Nola," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 114 (1996), 165–172, at pp. 168–169.

9 Paulinus, *Epist*. 49.1, p. 390, 7–10: *Opera domini praedicare honorificum est, quae mihi causa huius epistolae fuit, quia patris familias huius, quem ad unanimitatem tuam prosequor, Secundiniani negotium, ut probabis, non potest sine domini gloria et laude narrari*.

10 Erroneously, Mussfeldt, "Bleibende Fragen," p. 207, n. 4.

case), *argumentatio* (argument) and *peroratio* (conclusion). The essential facts of the legal case were presented only—as in an actual courtroom address—in the *narratio* (§1) and *conclusio* (§15). During the winter, storm and shipwreck had overtaken the ship in question close to sandbanks ('Ad Pulvinos') off the Sardinian coast.[11] Since the Republic, Sardinia had been a corn granary of the Roman Empire.[12] In fulfilment of a state commission, Secundinianus had been transporting cereals in a convoy with Sardinian *navicularii*, and could be held liable for the loss of his cargo.[13] He had had it loaded at Olbia, the grain export harbour on the island's north coast and also the point at which the key trading routes intersected.[14] Civil engineering works undertaken in the Olbia area in 1999, to provide a tunnel route to the harbour, uncovered a fleet of eleven 5th-century Roman trading vessels (none carrying cargo), and the remains of two ships of the Neronian period—an archaeological sensation (fig. 1–3)![15] Could the merchant flotilla overtaken by this disaster have been the very convoy regarding which our Secundinianus reported to Paulinus, the one that foundered over 1600 years ago either *in* or *near* the harbour at Olbia? Or was this simply another comparable natural disaster?[16] One can only wonder.

Forensic eloquence seeks to adduce evidence not only from the nature of the place where the action occurred, but also from the time at which it

11 Paulinus, *Epist*. 49.1, pp. 390, 24-391, 1: *Ilico, ut mihi retulit* (scil. *Secundinianus*), *in proximo freto exorta tempestas temere de portu solutam multarum navium classem a cursibus destinatis retorsit et fregit in litore. Huius navem in quodam eius insulae loco, quem ad Pulvinos vocant, ne similiter inlideretur, anchoris fundare conati sunt*.

12 On Sardinia's fertility and abundant productiveness in cereals in Late Antiquity, see *Expositio mundi* 66, ed. J. Rougé (Paris, 1966), pp. 340–341: *et ipsa ditissima fructibus et iumentis*.

13 B. Sirks, *Food for Rome: The Legal Structure of the Transportation and Processing of Supplies for the Imperial Distributions in Rome and Constantinople* (Amsterdam, 1991), p. 158.

14 Olbia, the northern port, is more probable as the loading-point than Carales (Cagliari), as it offered a shorter sea route to Rome: see J. Rougé, "*Periculum maris* et transport d'Etat: La lettre 49 de Paulin," in M. Mazza, ed., *Hestíasis. Studi di tarda antichità offerti a Salvatore Calderone II* (Messina, 1988), pp. 119–136, at p. 125, n. 19, versus F. Foerster and R. Pascual, *El naufragio de Valgius: Estracto comentado de la Epistola no. 49 de San Paulino de Nola* (Barcelona, 1985), p. 9, cf. P. Meloni, *La Sardegna romana* (Sassari, 1987), p. 163.

15 R. D'Oriano, "Relikte der Geschichte: Die Ausgrabung des Hafens von Olbia (Sardinien)," and E. Riccardi, "Wracks und mehr aus dem Hafen von Olbia," both in *Skyllis. Zeitschrift für Unterwasserarchäologie* 4.2 (2001), 126–135, esp. pp. 129–130; 136–148, esp. pp. 136 and 138 ('Wracks von Handelsschiffen ohne Ladung'). Cf. 'Il restauro dei relitti dell'antica Olbia' (12.3.2002), http://www.comune.olbia.ss.it/index.php?

16 This seems to refute D'Oriano's hypothesis ("Relikte der Geschichte," pp. 132–133) that meteorological disasters can be ruled out in this area in favour of an act of plunder by the Vandals. Riccardi ("Wracks," p. 138) takes a different view, referring to a 'catastrophic event'.

occurred (*argumenta a loco et a tempore*). The shipwreck occurred in winter, but Paulinus exculpates the ship-owner by attributing responsibility for the winter voyage—risky and not normally permitted—to "pressure from the state authorities" (*vi publica urgente*). This claim is borne out by a law of Honorius, of August 410, which decreed heavy fines for any officials who offered shelter in the harbours of their diocese to grain ships "on the pretext of stormy weather" (*sub praetextatu hiemis*) at times when favourable winds would have enabled them to continue their voyage.[17] There is thus a clear possibility that the shipwreck took place after the promulgation of this edict and during the famine of the winter of 410/11 in Rome.[18] The provisioning shortfall of the years 409/10 caused by Alaric's repeatedly laying siege to the city,[19] or the breakdown of the African corn supplies in 412/13,[20] would have necessitated the replenishment of the imperial granaries before the reopening of the sea lanes in April.[21] On this basis, Paulinus' letter of recommendation would have been written in summer 411 or 413.

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17 *CTh* 13.5.34, ed. T. Mommsen (1905; repr. Hildesheim, 1990), p. 756 (15.8. 410): *Iudices qui in portibus dioeceseos suae onusta navigia, cum prosperior flatus invitat, sub praetextatu hiemis immorari permiserint, una cum municipibus et corporatis eiusdem loci fortunarum propriarum feriantur dispendiis*. See Sirks, *Food for Rome*, p. 159, ignored by Mußfeldt, "Bleibende Fragen," pp. 210–211.

18 By contrast E. Tengström, *Bread for the People: Studies of the Corn-Supply of Rome during the Late Empire* (Stockholm, 1974), p. 41 argues for the winter 409, when the African priest from Milevis is making his crossing. See also Trout, *Paulinus of Nola*, p. 188, n. 163, and E.T. Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama: A study of the North African episcopate at the time of Augustine* (Oxford, 2008), p. 172, n. 51. The *terminus post quem* of the letter is 409, because Paulinus, described in §14 as *pastor exigui gregis*, cannot have been consecrated bishop of Nola earlier.

19 See the list of bottlenecks in the Roman food supply chain in L. Cracco Ruggini, *Economia e società nell' 'Italia annonaria'* (Milan, 1961), pp. 171–172, and Walsh, *Letters* 2, p. 358, n. 5 (408–411 A.D.). See also Rougé's ("Periculum maris," pp. 135–136) and Meloni's (*Sardegna romana*, p. 198) dating.

20 Africa was in revolt under Heraclianus in 412/13, see Foerster and Pascual's dating (*El naufragio*, p. 8).

21 On the *mare clausum* from November to April and the 'proscription' of winter navigation, see Rougé, "Periculum maris," pp. 121–123, 127–129, and 136, E. de Saint-Denis, "Mare clausum," *Revue des Études Latines* 25 (1947), 196–212 and Sirks, *Food for Rome*, pp. 42–43.

4 Argumentatio: The Magic of the Divine

As far as *argumenta ad persona* were concerned, the defence rested on shaky ground: the sole survivor of the shipwreck and only witness on whom the ship-owner could call was Valgius, a 60-year-old Sardinian seaman, whose sole *raison d'être* was to bail out the bilge-water. Socially despised, and so unimportant (*vilem animam*) that the rest of the crew forgot about him as they abandoned the vessel in the hope of saving themselves. Paulinus uses a rhetorical trick to neutralize this drawback: he compares Valgius' voyage with that of Paul to Rome, placing the recent shipwreck on a par with the Apostle's shipwreck on Malta. As his *tertium comparationis* he cites the *divina opera*, the theme of the recommendation: "Happier was the crew of Paul's ship, which was entrusted to the Apostle ... But we can glory in the works of God no less in the case of this ship of Secundinianus [with Valgius on board]" (49.11, p. 399, 1–4). Paulinus has woven details from Acts (27) into Valgius' shipwreck—and improved on them. The death threatening the crew in the ship's boat becomes terrible reality for all except Valgius; the leaking cargo vessel passes not 14 but 23 days adrift in the Mediterranean; the loss of the grain is theft, not a deliberate measure to lighten the ship; and the vision promising rescue is announced not by an angel of God, but by God and Jesus in person.

The litigation provides the external framework within which Paulinus interprets the deliverance of the crewman as a miracle (*mirabilia*) and stages it as a drama with a place in the Christian salvation narrative (*caelestis historia*). He has taken his inspiration from the scene of the action and from the genre of adventurous travel tales and seafaring yarns.[22] The only survivor, Valgius, was also an eye-witness to the miracle and is the protagonist of the quasi-autobiographical story-telling. He had not realised that he alone had been left behind on the sinking ship. His emergence, like Jonah from the whale, from the depths of the ship's belly places him in—from one point of view—an extreme

22 V. Pöschl lists a large number of such tales in his *Bibliographie zur antiken Bildersprache* (Heidelberg, 1964), pp. 546–548. See also G. Guttilla, "Tre naufragi di contenuto cristiano del IV secolo d.C. (Ambrogio, *de exc. Fratr*. 1, 43–48, Paolino *carm*. 24, 1–308 ed *Epist*. 49)," in G. Luongo, ed., *Anchora vitae: Atti del II Convegno Paoliniano nel XVI centenario del Ritiro di Paolino a Nola* (Napoli and Roma, 1998), pp. 431–461. Mention need be made here only of the baptism after shipwreck of Uranius Satyrus, Ambrosius' brother, as a model (*De exitu Satyri* 44; 47; 50). A further parallel is put forward by Paulinus himself in his *Iter Nolanum*, which includes the shipwreck of Martinianus off Marseilles (*Carm.* 24.95–98, p. 209).

situation, that of utter abandonment. Like *pius Aeneas* finding himself cast up by Juno's gale on the hostile coast of Africa, Valgius "saw a scene of desolation, 'with sea and sky all around him' ", (49.2, p. 391, 12–13, cf. Virgil *Aeneis* 3, 193):[23] *vacua omnia, mare undique et caelum undique videt*. Yet that moment in which he experienced total abandonment was also his opportunity. His gaze on high and the ritual of six days of fasting enabled him to behold the divine. Valgius' vision of the *adventus Christi* and his deliverance from mortal peril constitute the dramatic climax.[24] The poetic evocation of the scene as a *locus horribilis* leads directly to the key experience: the conversion.

Paulinus has styled Valgius as an *amicus dei*,[25] given a new identity by his confrontation with the divine and by the touch of the god. There is a kind of epiphanic fulfillment in the reciprocal gaze of this act, both for the human beholder, who discovers his deepest identity in the presence of the god, and for the god, who receives the appropriate worship from the human.[26] For the sailor, the sea voyage and the epiphany have become a *rite de passage* toward conversion, a procedure which turns the Valgius into a Victor (49.2, p. 392, 4–8): "... he is victorious ... That is, he triumphed both at sea ... over storms and shipwreck, and recently on land ... over sin and the devil."[27] The new baptismal name symbolizes his transformation and rise to become one of the "friends of God";[28] the rebirth (*regeneratio*) of baptism—baptism perhaps by Paulinus at Nola—has created 'from the old man' (Valgius) a 'new man'—Victor.[29]

The shipwrecked mariner becomes the medium in which Christ's miracles are performed. In the same way as Apollo, god of poetry, tweaks the shepherd Tityrus by the ear, inspiring him to compose in the bucolic mode, here the crewman Valgius, securely sleeping through the height of the storm, is touched

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23 Virgil, *Aeneis* 3.193, ed. G.B. Conte (Berlin, 2009), p. 72: *nec amplius ullae adparent terrae, caelum undique et undique pontus*. The epic supplies both image and anadiplosis.

24 Paulinus, *Epist.* 49.2, p. 391, 17–18: ... *misericors et miserator dominus adire comminus* ...

25 Below, note 28; see P. Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), pp. 55–80 and N. Janowitz, *Icons of Power: Ritual Practices in Late Antiquity* (University Park, Pa., 2002), pp. 127–128 on the contrasting modes of approaching divinity.

26 J. Elsner, *Roman Eyes: Visuality and Subjectivity in Art and Text* (Princeton, 2007), p. 24.

27 Paulinus, *Epist.* 49.2, p. 392, 1–4: ... *quod etiam nomen accepit, quo nunc et regeneratione censetur et ab hominibus et ab angelis scribitur; gentilicio enim signo Valgius vocabatur qui nunc Victor a domino dicitur* ...

28 Paulinus, *Epist.* 49.12, p. 400, 23: ... *denique ut novum nomen acciperet sicut amici dei* ...

29 Paulinus, *Epist.* 49.2, p. 392, 8–9: *ut totus in Christo novandus neque in nomine neque in homine veteri permaneret*.

on the ear[30] by Christ in whose bosom he reposes. The word and the touch of god confer magical powers on Valgius, and he marvels at the miracle "that his work", as if by magic, had been performed for him "without any effort" on his part, "by the hands of angels" (*manibus angelicis*).[31] He needed only to stretch out his hand in order to manoeuvre the ship, fit a foremast or chop down the mainmast: "At only the second impact of the axe—and it was not so much a blow as a light touch, for his was an old man's hand—the mast leapt so far forward from the blow that it was hurled far from the ship into the sea, where it fell safely."[32] Anything Valgius touched would function of its own accord. On several occasions Valgius "saw" (*saepe vidit*) armed soldiers from the army of heaven on watch on the ship, and performing all the sailors' duties, under the direction of Christ: "Indeed, none but angels were suitable sailors for that ship, for its rudder was the Helmsman of the universe."[33]

Paulinus has not placed the defence of the ship-owner and his seaman in the centre of his argument. Instead, he focuses on the vision of the divine Helmsman (§2–14), a figure that shimmers elusively, shifting between the radiance of Christ the ruler of the world and the image of Paulinus' patron saint, Felix, and dispensing magical powers: "the Lord Himself sat at the stern, now with his own shining countenance and gleaming hair, … now in the revered appearance of His friend and confessor, my lord and our common patron Felix."[34] A confusing wordplay involving the two figures emphasizes the

30 Paulinus, *Epist.* 49.3, p. 392, 12–13: … *vellicata blande auricula suscitavit* (scil. *Valgi dominus salutaris*). Cf. Virgil, *Eclogae* 6.3–4, ed. with comm. by W. Clausen (Oxford, 1994), p. 16, a proverbial expression (p. 180): … *Cynthius aurem / vellit et admonuit* (scil. *Tityrum*).

31 A paradox, note the oxymoron in Paulinus, *Epist.* 49.3, p. 392, 19–20: … *stupens laborem sibi sine labore praecerpi* … 49.3, p. 392, 13–15: … *cum leviter adnitens senex a primo statim conatu suo manibus angelicis res effectas videret*. It is seen by the fishermen too, appearing to them as a fata morgana involving armed men. On magic as an act of communication with and participation in the divine sphere see F. Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, trans. F. Philip (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1997), p. 214.

32 Paulinus, *Epist.* 49.2, p. 391, 25–27.

33 Paulinus, *Epist.* 49.3, p. 392, 25–26: *nec sane navem illam nisi angeli nautae decebant, cui gubernaculum erat mundi gubernator*.

34 Paulinus, *Epist.* 49.3, p. 392, 26–27, according to St. John's Apocalypse 1: 14: *ipse enim dominus nunc suo vultu coruscus* … *et coma fulgidus, nunc confessoris et amici sui, domini mei, communis patroni Felicis ore venerabilis in puppe sedit* … On Christ as Helios with an aureole of rays, see the mosaic from the mausoleum of the Julii in the Vatican, c. 300, in M. Wallraff, *Christus Verus Sol: Sonnenverehrung und Christentum in der Spätantike* (Münster, 2001), pp. 158–162, fig. 13. Cf. also the theomorphic ruler image of Nero with aureole of rays on coins and alluding to Phoebus Apollo, e.g. Seneca, *Apocolocynthosis* 4.31–32, ed. and trans. P.T. Eden (Cambridge, 1984), p. 34: *flagrat nitidus fulgore remisso*

exchange of roles, the transformation of Felix, “the Lord’s martyr”, into Christ, “the Lord of that martyr”: *aut domini martyrem aut dominum martyris* (49.3, p. 393, 5).[35] Valgius’ report is characterized by bizarre rhetoric: he would throw himself at the feet now of Christ, now of the martyr Felix steering for him.[36] The theological conception that Paulinus presents through the action incorporates pagan, syncretist ideas: he assures Macarius that Christ himself was actually present in St. Felix, as he is in all saints.[37] The close bond between Valgius and the patron saint of Nola also explains Paulinus’ obligation vis-à-vis his client.

Paulinus stages the deliverance from shipwreck with the help of an *amplificatio*—a rhetorical figure originally from drama[38]—as a spectacle enacted on the world stage, with God as the director and Valgius the hero. Like a mirage, the unseaworthy grain vessel drifts on the waters, “a ship that seemed endowed with divine powers” (*quasi divina navis*), moved only by the afflatus of the divine.[39] After 23 days God bade the storm to cease and showed pity to Valgius, just as he had pity for all those who “drift here and there on the world’s ocean (*mundi pelago*) seeking help”.[40] This odyssey resembles a total retreat from the world, such as generally precedes any conversion. Valgius was *a terris … et ab hominibus exclusus* (49.7, p. 396, 8). However, the topography seems to echo the criss-cross voyagings of Aeneas on the Tyrrhenian Sea; the ship is actually in sight of the Portus lighthouse, near Rome, when it is driven

/ *vultus et adfuso cervix formosa capillo*. See S. Mratschek, “Nero the Imperial Misfit: Philhellenism in a Rich Man’s World,” in M. Dinter and E. Buckley, eds., *A Companion to the Neronian Age* (Malden, MA, 2013), pp. 48–50, 56–59.

35 It combines the parallelism of the ideas with a chiasmus of accusative and genitive.

36 Paulinus, *Epist*. 49.3, p. 393, 6: *narrat gaudio lacrimans senex se ad ipsius pedes nunc domini, nunc martyris gubernantis sibi solitum procubare …*

37 Paulinus, *Epist*. 49.4, p. 393, 23–25: *ergo cum et sancti sui confessoris effigie senem nautam fovebat, ipse aderat in sancto suo …*

38 Defined by D.A. Russell, *‘Longinus’: On the Sublime* (Oxford, 1964, repr. 1982), p. 107: ‘In the most general terms αὔξησις includes all means of making things seem bigger … than they are.’ See A. Weische, “Rhetorik und Philosophie in der Antike: *Amplificatio—dilatio* and the Stoics’ advocacy of *brevitas*,” in H. Schanze and J. Kopperschmidt, eds., *Rhetorik und Philosophie* (München, 1989), pp. 23–33.

39 Paulinus, *Epist*. 49.8, p. 396, 25–29: … *tam directo otiosus senex inoffensoque navigio praeterivit, ut quasi divina navis et inmisso divinitus spiritu sapiens sua sponte cavenda vitaret* … The favourable wind symbolizes the Holy Spirit.

40 Paulinus, *Epist*. 49.5, p. 395, 2–4.

by the gales first towards Africa, then back to Sicily before finally beaching on the south-west coast of Bruttium, in the province of Lucania.[41]

Strategies of visualization open a window into heaven (49.10, p. 398, 1–2): *Proponamus ergo nobis animo et mente cernamus pulcherrimum divini operis spectaculum* ... Allusions to Virgil and the Classics served to win the sympathies of the cultured reader. Seafaring metaphors taken from the myth of the fabled *Argo* or that of the arrival of the healing god Asclepius on the Tiber island were trumped and superseded by images taken from the Bible.[42] Christian intellectuals considered the Church to be the ship built of the wood of the Lord's Cross, which has the cross as its mainmast or is steered by a rudder fashioned from the wood of the Cross. At the time of the first 'shipwreck' that befell the world, Noah's Ark brought rescue; at the second, with Christ at the helm, it is the wood of the Cross that represents salvation.[43] Existing allegory and typology thus give Macarius the cue to detect a deeper, religious meaning underlying the miraculous events. Noah's Ark, the ship of the Apostle Paul, and the ship of Jonah: all could be interpreted as archetypes of the Church (*ecclesiae imago*) or as symbols of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ,[44] and all could

41 With stages such as Africa, Sicily, Campania and Rome: Virgil, *Aeneis*, Book 1: Aeneas is driven by the elements to Africa; B. 2–3: Retrospect on the seaborne wanderings in the eastern Mediterranean (Actium, Buthrothum) and Sicily; B. 5: a storm forces the Aeneads to land in Sicily; B. 6: landing in Cumae, the entrance to the underworld; B. 7: Arrival in Latium; B. 8: Rome. They omit only the wanderings across the eastern Mediterranean, on which the hero reports retrospectively.

42 Paulinus, *Epist*. 49.8, p. 397, 20 and 23: *Argonautarum infelicium puppem; vectricem draconis Epidaurii navem*.

43 Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 15.26, ed. B. Dombart and A. Kalb (Stuttgart, 1993), p. 114, 25–26 on the ark: *procul dubio figura est peregrinantis in hoc saeculo civitatis dei, hoc est ecclesiae, quae fit salva per lignum* ... The Church itself is a ship on the high seas. In a sermon attributed to Ambrose (*Sermo* 47.2, PL 17: 723B), the ship and Christ on the Cross are actually identified with each other. See H. Rahner, *Symbole der Kirche: Die Ekklesiologie der Väter* (Salzburg, 1964), pp. 304–564; also, on the catalogues of ships in Hippolytus, Ambrose and Petrus Chrysologus, pp. 308–313. On Christ as the helmsman and on the comparison of the steering-oar with the Cross, see the sermons of St. John Chrysologus dating from the time of the barbarian invasions (*Sermo* 21.2 on Marc. 4:35–40, ed. A. Olivar, (Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina) 24 (Turnhout, 1982), p. 123) and of Pseudo-John Chrysostomus (*In venerabilem crucem:* PG 50: 817): for current discussion see A. Felber, "Zur altchristlichen 'Theologie des Holzes'," in P. Scherrer, ed., *Lignum: Holz in der Antike* (Graz, 2011), pp. 121–126.

44 Paulinus, *Epist*. 49.9, p. 397, 26–30: *Sunt nobis nostrae naves* ... *Habemus et arcam Noe. Habemus et navem Tharsi navemque Tharsensis. Sed illa, de qua dei fugitivum prophetam ultor et custos cetus excepit* ... See also Walsh, *Letters* 2, p. 360, n. 57 and Trout, *Paulinus of Nola*, p. 190, n. 174.

be compared with the ship owned by Secundinianus. Nor was it by chance that a space as loaded with symbolic significance as Rome should be the journey's destination and end-point. Only in Rome, at the central focus of Christianity, has the 'sacred ship' of the Church (and of Secundinianus) finally sailed into port.[45] The *vicarius praefectorum* is invited to penetrate into that world in an act of imaginative fantasy and to share in witnessing the 'magnificent spectacle' (*pulcherrimum … spectaculum*).[46] Or to forget the hard facts of the case—the impending liability of the ship-owner for the lost cargo—and allow the visual and performative flood of Christian images to take over his mind.

5 Conclusion

5.1 *The Procurator's Crime*

Only in the last chapter (15) is the illusion finally broken. We learn why the ship-owner Secundinianus was unable to deliver the state-owned grain to the *praefectus annonae* in Rome as regulations required. Paulinus explains the submission of his petition to Macarius as follows (49.15, p. 403, 18–28): "I hear that it was the agent of a Christian, our brother Postumianus, who seized and stripped the ship. It had run aground on the Bruttian shore where the estate of the senator is washed by the waves, and the bailiff showed himself greedier than the sea, practising piracy on land without a pirate ship. Even now it lies empty on that shore to bear witness to the loss of its cargo which was vainly preserved on the sea and lost on land." Paulinus is here describing a typical example of the notorious collusion, rife during the period of the barbarian invasions, between brigands active in Southern Italy[47] and estate managers who protected them.[48] The crime scene and the villa were close to the foothills of the

45 Paulinus, *Epist.* 49.11, p. 399, 16–17: … *quae* (scil. *navis*) *plenam fidei ecclesiae exhibens formam tutos in portum Romamque pervexit*.

46 On conversion as a *spectaculum* on the stage of the *theatrum mundi*, see S. Mratschek, "Visionen des Lebens: Ein *spectaculum* im Theater Christi und auf der Bühne der Welt," *Poetica* 39 (2007), 21–57, at pp. 47–49.

47 The areas most seriously affected, according to *CTh* 9.30.2, ed. T. Mommsen, *Theodosiani libri XVI cum constitutionibus Sirmondianis et leges novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes* (Berlin, 1905), p. 484 (5.10. 364), were Apulia et Calabria, Bruttium et Lucania, and Samnium. The letter is dated by Meloni, *Sardegna romana*, pp. 198–199, to the period of 'distacco dall'autorità centrale'.

48 Corruption and abuse of power on the part of estate managers of inferior or unfree birth were commonplace, and numerous new laws were introduced to combat the problem. On imperial legislation directed against estate managers ensconced on remote rural

Calabrian Apennines. The fishermen who rescued Valgius from the sea turned out—as in the *Satyricon* of Petronius—to be *latrones*.[49] Ship and cargo were seized by the procurator. This conflicted with a rescript issued by the Emperor Caracalla, which decreed that stranded ships remained the property of their owners.[50] Paulinus uses an oxymoron to brand this act of "piracy... without a pirate ship" as outrageous. The "sacred ship" is personified and invoked as witness to the crime.

What were the likely legal consequences? As the shipper, Secundinianus was responsible for the delivery of the grain—and this included liability for loss by theft (*furtum*), given his duty of safekeeping (*custodia*).[51] The procurator had interfered in the public grain supply—an offence for which, ever since the Augustan *Lex Julia de annona*, the emperors had imposed progressively severer penalties.[52] And yet no one thought of bringing a criminal prosecution against the senator or even the estate manager.[53] Was it really such a futile undertaking to prove intent on the procurator's part—or did no one dare to challenge the power of the senator? In order to have his ship and cargo

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properties and enjoying unrestricted power (*CTh* 5.7.2, p. 123: 10.12. 409 [408]), formed alliances with *latrones* for personal gain and even leased out their masters' property (*CTh* 2.30.2, p. 122: 11[?].7. 422). See Rougé, "Periculum maris," pp. 132–135, and S. Dill, *Roman Society in the last Century of the Western Empire* (New York, 1958), pp. 268–269.

49 Rougé, "Periculum maris," pp. 132–133, unmasks the scene as an ironic allusion to the thieving *piscatores* in the *Satyricon* of Petronius 114.14, ed. K. Mueller (Stuttgart, 1995), p. 123, 23–24.

50 *CJ* 11.6.1 (211/17), *CIC*, vol. 2, ed. P. Krüger (1954; repr. Hildesheim, 1989), p. 429: *si quando naufragio navis expulsa fuerit ad litus vel si quando reliquam terram attigerit, ad dominos pertineat*... See Sirks, *Food for Rome*, p. 241.

51 In a case of this kind Justinian allowed the *actio furti*, cf. *CIC*, vol. 1, ed. T. Mommsen and P. Krüger (1963; repr. Hildesheim, 1988), *Institutiones* 4.1.13 (15)—15 (17), ed. Krüger, p. 44, but a similar position was described as far back as the first century A.D. in Gaius, *Institutiones* 3.203–207, esp. 203, ed. and trans. J. Reinach and M. Ducos (Paris, 1991), pp. 133–134: *Furti autem actio ei competit cuius interest rem salvam esse, licet dominus non sit. Itaque nec domino aliter competit quam si eius intersit rem non perire*. On *custodia* and *locatio conductio*, see M. Kaser, *Das römische Privatrecht*, (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft) 3.3.2, 2nd ed. (München, 1971–1975), vol. 2, p. 567.

52 Ulpian, *De officio proconsulis* 9 (*Digesta* 48.12.2, *CIC*, vol. 1, ed. Mommsen, p. 858); Papirius Iustus, *De constitutionibus* 1 (*Dig*. 48.12.3, p. 858); Marcian, *Institutiones* 2 (*Dig*. 48.12.1, p. 858; 48.2.13, p. 842); Hermogenian, *Iuris epitome* 1 (*Dig*. 5.1.53, p. 106); see D. Liebs, *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 112 (2005), at p. 289, which has a reference to Sirks, *Food for Rome*, pp. 40–41, 157–61.

53 Cf. also the disregard of the imperial ban on exports, Liebs, *Savigny-Zeitschrift*, p. 289, n. 5.

restored, the ship-owner, relying on the *actio furti*, had to initiate an action seeking a *rei vindicatio*[54] and due punishment for the thieves.[55] This had to be done within two years of the date the cargo was taken on and the bill of lading signed.[56] The *navicularius* was accordingly forced to move as fast as possible in lodging his complaint with the governor of the province (*corrector Lucaniae et Brittiorum*) in which the offence had been committed. This proved fruitless. The influence of the senator, Postumianus[57] was so powerful that the provincial governor still did not restore the looted and forsaken ship lying in the shallows to its owner even after the procurator had fled, removing himself from the jurisdiction of the court.

The ship-owner was left with no alternative but to apply for help from a higher magistrate able to compel the provincial governor to pronounce judgement: the accused had, after all, absconded and the position taken by his master, involved in the affair, was unknown. First, however, Secundinianus asked his friend, the bishop of Nola, to compose a recommendation. So even before the legal proceedings proper had begun—or as a better alternative—Paulinus submitted his petition to Macarius.[58] Perhaps he had some reason to think that he would not receive a favourable answer from the praetorian prefect, or that Macarius, a Christian, would be better disposed. In addition, the Western Empire's highest-ranking *vicarius*, a *vir spectabilis*,[59] had the authority to handle a complaint of this nature—and was powerful enough to override such

54 On *rei vindicatio*, see T. Mommsen, *Römisches Strafrecht* (Leipzig, 1899), pp. 733–759; cf. O.F. Robinson, *The Criminal Law of Ancient Rome* (Baltimore, 1995), pp. 24–25.

55 Provided that in the case of a shipment commissioned by the state the 'classical' liability categories of private law *locatio conductio* still applied. During this period immediate intervention was possible: see M. Kaser and K. Hackl, *Das römische Zivilprozessrecht*, 2nd ed. (München, 1996), p. 626.

56 *CTh* 13.5.26, p. 753 (23.12. 396): *Constantiniana lex… his ex susceptarum die specierum concluso biennio securitates reportare permisit*. See Sirks, *Food for Rome*, pp. 123–124.

57 On the identity of the senator named Postumianus (*PLRE* 2, p. 901, Postumianus 2, stemma 20), who owned a further estate not far away in Sicily (*CIL* X 8061.4 = *ILCV* 862), see Mratschek, *Der Briefwechsel des Paulinus*, p. 379. His grandson, Rufius Praetexatus Postumianus (*PLRE* 2, p. 901, Postumianus 4), who served two spells as urban prefect, was too young: erroneously, Walsh, *Letters* 2, p. 362, quoted by G. Santaniello, *Paolino di Nola: Le Lettere*, vol. 2 (Napoli, 1992), p. 589, n. 23, and M. Skeb, *Epistulae: Briefe* III (Freiburg i. Br., 1998), p. 1041.

58 Contrary to what L. De Salvo, *Economia private e pubblici servizi nell' impero romano: I corpora naviculariorum* (Messina, 1992), p. 370 evidently assumes, this was not an appeal to the *praefectus annonae* or the *vicarius urbis Romae*.

59 In the *Notitia dignitatum* (*occ*. 19.1; 20.8, etc.; ed. O. Seeck, Berlin, 1876), the vicars of Rome were classed, like the proconsuls, as *viri spectabiles*: cf. W. Enßlin, "vicarius," *RE* 8 A2 (1958), 2015–2053, at pp. 2032–2033.

influence as a senator could exert. It was to Rome, moreover, that the procurator had fled, and in Rome that Postumianus, the senator whose protection he sought, was currently residing. Macarius was not only the highest authority on-site after the urban prefect[60] but also the supervisor of the governors of the eight suburbicarian provinces,[61] which included Lucania and Bruttium. He therefore was particularly well suited to act as an intermediary in arranging a settlement between the ship-owner and the senator.[62] Yet further advantages were that he oversaw the *perfectissimi*, among which, since Constantine, the *navicularii* had been numbered,[63] and also collaborated closely with the *praefectus annonae*.[64]

5.2 *The Settlement: An Icon of Power in Return for Ship and Cargo*

As in an actual legal hearing, the *conclusio* serves to evoke pity (*miseratio*) for the client and indignation (*indignatio* or *odium*) at the culprit. The strategies of visualization Paulinus uses here construct the bridge that links the magical effect generated by the presence of the Saviour God with the offence against property. By claiming for Secundinianus' ship the status of *Christi munus*, he gains powerful new arguments in support of the petition he submits to Macarius, arguments that transcend the customary separation between the divine and human spheres (49.15, p. 403, 16–28): "You will lay claim on this gift of Christ.[65] Do not allow the envy of the devil, through the agency of a wicked

60 *Notitia dignitatum occ*. 19. See also A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602* (1964; repr. Oxford, 1973), vol. 2, pp. 481–482.

61 *Notitia dignitatum occ*. 1.24; 19; see Enßlin, "vicarius," p. 2027. While the jurisdiction of the *praefectus annonae* in Late Antiquity did not extend beyond Rome, that of the *vicarius urbis Romae* embraced the lands of Central and Southern Italy and the islands of Corsica, Sicily and Sardinia off whose shores the theft had taken place. See W. Kuhoff, *Studien zur zivilen senatorischen Laufbahn im 4. Jh. n. Chr*. (Frankfurt, 1983), pp. 123 ff. Any appeal against a judgement of the provincial governor—in the event never pronounced, as the accused had absconded—would have been submitted to him, or to the *praefectus praetorio*; see Kaser and Hackl, *Das römische Zivilprozessrecht*, p. 618, §95 I 1.

62 On the role of arbitration in this period see J.D. Harries, "Resolving Disputes: The Frontiers of Law in Late Antiquity," in R.W. Mathisen, ed., *Law, Society, and Authority in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 68–82.

63 The practice of admitting the *navicularii* to the rank of *equites* was endorsed by Julian and Gratian: see *CTh* 13.5.16, p. 751 (6.2. 380) and the reference to this by A. Stoeckle, "navicularii," *RE* 16.2 (1935), 1899–1932, at p. 1930.

64 *CTh* 13.9.5, p. 762 (15.4. 397); see De Salvo, *Economia privata*, p. 564.

65 *Adseres* and *munus* are legal terms. By *munus enim Christi adseres* … I mean that Christ had already made the donation to another person. Walsh's translation (*Letters* 2, p. 274) 'You will be performing the work of Christ' is misleading.

man, to deprive or to continue to deprive Secundinianus of what God restored to him from the shipwreck."

Valgius, the eye-witness and sole survivor of the shipwreck, had accompanied the ship's owner in presenting the petition.[66] At the hearing, as a *vilissima persona* (i.e. as a *humilior*), he stood to face interrogation under torture.[67] In order to spare him this, Paulinus began by painting a pity-inducing portrait of the victim,[68] then used the *amplificatio* to upgrade him from ordinary witness to eye-witness and the very medium of the workings of God (*testimonium divinae veritatis*).[69] At the close of his arguments, Paulinus confronted Macarius—Italy's second highest civil official—with the rhetorical question as to whether there could be any worldly distinction he would rather have than the honour that God had conferred on that old man: "Do those men seem to you happier who are bright with purple, who sip from jewelled cups, who swell within a toga, who are adorned with embroidered tunic?"[70] The *dei dignitas* of

66 Paulinus, *Epist.* 49.15, p. 403, 28–29: *Haec Secundinianum meum necessitas ad urbem et itinere terreno peregrinari cum suo unico nauta coegit.*

67 This view is taken also by Rougé ("Periculum maris," p. 132) and De Salvo (*Economia privata*, p. 371), who discuss the question of whether torture was remitted in Valgius' case on the grounds that a sole survivor did not suffice as a witness. However, they base their argument, erroneously, on a public-law case following a shipwreck, in which two or three sailors were interrogated under torture, but the ship-owner spared torture on the grounds of his equestrian status: cf. *CTh* 13.9.2–3, p. 761 (6.2. 380) and Sirks, *Food for Rome*, p. 159. In fact, interrogation under torture was exceedingly rare in civil cases, and even then mostly used on slaves. According to Paulus, *Sententiae* 5.15.6 (*Fontes Iuris Romani Antejustiniani*, Pars 2, ed. S. Riccobono and J. Baviera [Florence, 1968] = *FIRA* II^2, p. 403), it was used, exceptionally, in inheritance cases: see Kaser and Hackl, *Das römische Zivilprozessrecht*, p. 367, §53^{49}, 605, §92$^{63-64}$; cf. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, vol. 1, p. 519 and P. Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1970), p. 216, n. 1–2, for the only two pieces of documentary evidence of the torturing of *humiles*.

68 Paulinus comments, that Christ (unlike Roman justice) had not hesitated to save the man in spite of his low status, *Epist.* 49.5, p. 394, 5–6: *Denique non illi* (scil. *deo*) *hic de calamitate naufragii neque de senio et egestate nauta vilior fuit.* 49.12, p. 400, 7–10: *Quid huic, quaeso, obfuit seni persona sentinatoris et in nautis vilissima, inops habitus et mastruca Sardorum? Nam pellibus sutis vestiebatur, cum illum dominus … adloquio suo beabat …* He was a *senex* (49.1, p. 390, 18; 2–4, p. 391, 11, 33; p. 392, 9; p. 396, 26) and *vetus navita* (49.13, p. 401, 1), i.e. over 60 years old, unless Paulinus was using the term hyperbolically for men aged 45 to 60. Valgius' habitual clothing corresponded to the ascetic's "hair-shirt".

69 Paulinus, *Epist.* 49.14, p. 402, 22–24. Admirably interpreted with all classical and theological allusions in Trout, *Paulinus of Nola*, pp. 190–191; cf. Mratschek, *Der Briefwechsel des Paulinus*, pp. 385–386.

70 Paulinus, *Epist.* 49.12, p. 399, 28–p. 400, 1–3: *Interrogare enim libet, ullane te huius saeculi dignitate quam hac dei dignitate adfici malles, qua senex iste perfunctus est? Beatioresne tibi*

the sheepskin-clad Sardinian, his garment reminiscent of an ascetic's *melota*,[71] stood higher than the *saecularis dignitas* of a politician in triumphal robes and purple. For God had spoken to him and revealed his face.[72]

The miraculously spared and newly converted shipwrecked sailor thus was presented to the vicar of Rome not as a socially and judicially underprivileged witness obliged to testify in court under threat of torture, but as a guest's gift (*xenium spiritale*) and walking proof of divine truth (*testimonium divinae veritatis*): a "living relic" (*vivum senem*) and an icon of power, as it were.[73] And this was precisely what constituted the psychagogic effect of the recommendation—a magic stronger than the governors' power, against which even the vicar would not be proof. *Pastor exigui gregis sed magni pignoris munerator ut xenium spiritale transmisi*, observed the bishop of Nola modestly (49.14, p. 401, 26–27), as he exchanged the petitioner's role for that of the benefactor bestowing valuable cult objects. The strange gift of an actual person was compared with that of the splinters from the wood of the divine Cross and surpasses "lifeless objects". In the solemn ritual of translation, Paulinus also dedicates to Macarius the *caelestis historia* he had composed, with the aim of getting him into a more compliant mood—and of ensuring that it would circulate among the Roman gentry.[74]

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videntur qui purpura fulgent, qui gemma libant, toga farciuntur palmataque pinguntur . . . ? Coloured jewels and tunic with their allusion to luxury and *vanitas* are brought on as an instrument of evaluation, purple as the status symbol of the dominant elite; see M. Bradley, *Colour and Meaning in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge, 2009), ch. 2 and 7.

71 A. Dihle, "Das Gewand des Einsiedlers Antonius," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 22 (1979), 22–29.

72 Distribution of the social roles before God was not the same as in Roman society, see Paulinus, *Epist*. 49.12–13, pp. 400–402, esp. 49.14, p. 402, 29–30, p. 403, 1–2: *Quam religiose adspiciendus est hic, quem adloqui dei sermo dignatus est cui se facies divina non texit, cui nunc martyrem suum, nunc semet ipsum Christus ostendit . . .*

73 Notice the imperative addressed to Macarius (Paulinus, *Epist*. 49.14, p. 402, 22–24): *Considera quanto maior et plenior gratia sit vivum senem vel testimonio divinae veritatis inspicere!* I prefer to replace von Hartel's question-mark with an exclamation mark. See Conybeare, *Paulinus Noster*, p. 31; cf. Janowitz' definition, *Icons of Power*, xxiii: "(icon signs) . . . establish divine presences in rituals".

74 Paulinus, *Epist*. 49.15, p. 403, 8–10: *Habes, mi frater, xenium meum . . . , de . . . caelestis historia suavitate fastidium temperabis*. 49.1 (note 9). Translations of relics had already become a popular practice in Rome by the 5th century. See S. Diefenbach, *Römische Erinnerungsräume: Heiligenmemoria und kollektive Identitäten im Rom des 3. bis 5. Jh. n. Chr*. (Berlin, 2007), pp. 359–410; contrasting, A. Hartmann, *Zwischen Relikt und Reliquie: Objektbezogene Erinnerungspraktiken in antiken Gesellschaften* (Berlin, 2010), p. 263, n. 1300.

Through his communication with God, the shipwreck survivor became a "contact relic",[75] with Paulinus foremost in veneration. His *affectio … crudelis* indeed went so far as to almost wear away by incessant fingering—like any other cult object—the ear of Valgius that Christ merely touched; he would even have liked to cut off a part of that one ear, he confessed, "except that such a keepsake would have meant wounding him!"[76] This grotesque self-criticism on the part of Paulinus amounts to nothing but a subtle hint with regard to possible torture of the witness (allowed in cases of public interest like this). With an eye to the future, he suggested to the vicar of Rome how Valgius should be received: he should scarcely be touched physically, but instead be heard out, and contemplated with awe.[77] "I am sure that you will seek and desire some means of demonstrating the love you bear for Christ towards this man."[78] With these words Paulinus concluded his pleading for the seaman and turned to the cause of his other client: "You must put a great strain on your dutiful devotion and support Valgius' patron Secundinianus … with all the enthusiasm of your faith!" After all, Christ had restored his ship to him almost undamaged.[79]

And Paulinus did not neglect, in conclusion, to make the vicar of Rome aware of his thinking on what the outcome of the case should be: "This is the emergency which has caused my dear Secundinianus to journey to Rome by land in company with his sole sailor. I do not doubt that our brother Postumianus will be stirred by your intervention, and by his own faith and righteousness. This is why we must bring our own moderating influence to bear. You will certainly act without my urging to defend and to excuse with equal effort before that excellent senator and Christian that guilty servant of his. So the pirate's reward may be the avoidance of punishment, and we shall be content to get back from him the gifts bestowed by God."[80]

Under a law promulgated in 400 by Honorius, robbery of goods from the *navicularii* carried a penalty amounting to four times the loss concerned, and

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75 P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Late Antiquity* (Chicago, 1981), p. 88.

76 Paulinus, *Epist.* 49.14, p. 402, 9–12: *Nam tam adsidue aurem ipsius retractavi, ut paene detriverim. Voluissem quoque vel unius partem auris abscindere, nisi in illo vulneris quae mihi pignoris res fuisset.*

77 Paulinus, *Epist.* 49.14, p. 402, 2–4: *Videre enim mihi videor, qua gratulatione, qua admiratione, qua fide et auditurus de illo et visurus ipsum sis …*

78 Paulinus, *Epist.* 49.15, p. 403, 11–12: *Certo autem scio quaesiturum te et desideraturum aliquid, quo circa hunc hominem exerceas* (editio princeps) *caritatem, qua diligis Christum.*

79 Paulinus, *Epist.* 49.15, p. 403, 13–16 (with my own translation): … *tu studium piae devotionis intende et patrono huius Secundiniano, cui navem Christus omnipotens pro huius salute servatam iam desperanti reddidit, toto fidei tuae affectu adesto.*

80 Paulinus, *Epist.* 49.15, p. 403, 27—p. 404, 5; see Walsh's *Commentary*.

thus severer than the standard punishment for theft.[81] This meant that the procurator could expect a punishment for property offence (*furtum* or *rapina*) of twice or four times the real value.[82] Under the compromise proposal put forward by Paulinus, the action brought against him would be dropped in return for restoration of the ship and its cargo. It was on delivery of the cargo in Portus that the claim of the *navicularii* for financial compensation depended, including the bonus of 2.5 % of the freight value paid for transport in winter.[83] However, should the cargo be lost or spoilt, then the ship's owner, who bore the risk for the cargo, would be liable for losses occasioned by theft.[84] The cost of repairs to the now holed and mastless sailing vessel would likewise be the responsibility of its owner, Secundinianus himself.[85]

6 The Clash of the New *Paideia* with the Old

The rhetorical fusion of the diverse literary genres of forensic rhetoric in the style of the courtroom plea, the poetic visualization of the shipwreck, and

81 *CTh* 13.5.29, p. 754 (24.1. 400) with Kaser, *Privatrecht*, vol. 1, pp. 614, 626–627 and E. Weiss, "Naufragium," *RE* 16,2 (1935), 1899: *Solidos itaque, quos sublimitas tua eruere valuit ab his qui in navicularios praedas egerunt, volumus naviculariorum commodis reservari. Et ne simpli poena in raptores constituta crescat audacia, in posterum sancimus, ut, quicumque in rapinis fuerit deprehensus, in poenam quadrupli teneatur*. The offence of *rapina* was not the same as expropriation during a disaster (*de incendio ruina naufragio*); see Robinson, *Criminal Law*, p. 35.

82 On two- to fourfold compensation in cases of *furtum*, see Mommsen, *Römisches Strafrecht* 4 §8, p. 752; on fourfold for *rapina, Römisches Strafrecht* 4 §2$^{3-4}$, p. 661, cf. Robinson, *Criminal Law*, p. 30.

83 *CTh* 13.9.3.2, p. 761 (6.2. 380): … *ut a duarum semis centesimarum, quae ex hibernis oneribus postulantur a vobis, petitio conquiescat*. See Sirks, *Food for Rome*, p. 158. According to *CTh* 13.5.7, p. 749 (1.12. 334), the freight tariffs for the *navicularii Orientis* amounted to one *solidus* per thousand *modii* of the grain carried, and applied throughout the empire; a small percentage (1 to 4 %) of the cargo was added, depending on the length of the delivery journey; see Sirks, *Food for Rome*, pp. 123–125, 148, and P. Herz, *Studien zur römischen Wirtschaftsgesetzgebung: Die Lebensmittelversorgung* (Stuttgart, 1988), pp. 256–257.

84 Only in cases of *force majeure* could he disclaim liability for compensation. In these cases the *navicularii* would have to bear the loss themselves (*CTh* 13.5.32, p. 755 [19.1. 409] = *CJ* 11.6.6, p. 430); cf. Sirks, *Food for Rome*, pp. 160, n. 44; 158.

85 *CTh* 13.5.14.1, p. 751 (11.2. 371) applied only when the ship-owner was a member of the *naviculariorum corpus* of the eastern provinces: … (scil. *navigiorum*) *reparationem deinceps per singulos annos isdem naviculariis ex concessa iugorum immunitate curaturis*. In cases of *angaria* he did not profit from tax reductions.

the hagiographic vision of the divine as a "spectacle" played out on the world stage turned this classical recommendation into a hybrid composition imbued with a power of suggestion that surpassed the power of the *vicarius Romae* to whom it was addressed. As Naomi Janowitz explains, "the limits of human access to the supernatural were the limits of human imagination".[86] In taking this approach, Paulinus was following the advices (*praecepta*) of rhetoric based on Quintilian's account (6.2.29–30) of the psychological impact of imagery: In response to the φαντασίαι or *visiones*, "the images of absent things are presented to the mind in such a way that we seem actually to see them with eyes and have them physically present to us. He who has captured them well (as Paulinus did), will achieve the most powerful emotional effect—*is erat in adfectibus potentissimus*."[87]

The bishop of Nola has woven his petition into a narrative of miracles and transformed the witness summons for the legal hearing into an act of holy gift-giving. His letter of recommendation thus enables him to build up a complex web of relationships among the disputing parties so that the settlement sought by Paulinus could be achievable before or in place of any formal hearing. Paulinus' achievement here is that he follows up the emotional appeal to the competent magistrate by using Christian discourses to draw his opponent, Postumianus, into the exchanges between the participants; his father before him, the homonymous praetorian prefect of the East in 383, had been known for the strength of his religious commitment.[88] Valgius—the contact relic—in this way becomes the medium that acquires magical powers from having had the vision of the divine and so in turn constitutes the link between all four

86 Janowitz, *Icons of Power*, p. xi.

87 Quintilian, *The orator's education*, ed. and trans. D.A. Russell (Cambridge, Mass., 2001), pp. 58–59: *Quas* φαντασίας *Graeci vocant* (*nos sane visiones appellemus*)*, per quas imagines rerum absentium ita repraesentantur animo ut eas cernere oculis et praesentes habere videamur, has quisquis bene ceperit is erit in adfectibus potentissimus*. On late antique rhetoric echoing Cicero's and Quintilian's views, see G.A. Kennedy, *A new History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton, N.J., 1996), pp. 273–278.

88 *PLRE* I, p. 718, Postumianus 2, cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epist.* 173.3, ed. P. Gallay (Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller 53), (Berlin, 1969), pp. 124–125: προετελέσθης πρότερον τὴν εὐσέβειαν, εἶθ᾽ ὑπεδέξω. He had been asked by Gregory of Nazianzus in summer 383 to use his influence to preserve unity among the bishops assembled in Constantinople. See J. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and the Imperial Court A.D. 364–425*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1990), p. 128. He died later in 383 (cf. R. von Haehling, *Die Religionszugehörigkeit der hohen Amtsträger des Römischen Reiches seit Contantins I. Alleinherrschaft bis zum Ende der Theodosianischen Dynastie* [Bonn, 1978], pp. 71–72), and therefore is not the Postumianus with whom we are concerned here (*PLRE* 2, p. 901, Postumianus 2).

parties: the object of the petition (the ship-owner), the author and benefactor (Paulinus), the recipient of petition and relic (the vicar of Rome) and the putative guilty parties (the procurator and his master, Postumianus).[89]

The deployment of Christian metaphor in conjunction with rhetorical strategies and ascriptions creates a new reality transcending both the late antique lawsuit and the pragmatic political world. The sea voyage is transformed into a rite of passage. In place of the ideal statesman, Christ as *mundi gubernator* is at the helm of the world;[90] Christ 'appears' as the rescuer from peril at sea and as the true owner of the ship. Thus the theft of ship and cargo—gifts bestowed by God—metamorphoses from a punishable civil offence into an act of sacrilege. And thus it is scarcely surprising that the code used by Paulinus styles the inevitable appeal to the vicar of Rome as a *peregrinatio*, a freely undertaken pilgrimage to Rome.[91] Valgius, the indigent victim clad in the ascetic's sheepskin, changes too, into a potent icon and living relic; and the powerful, purple-clad vicar becomes an object of beneficence. That the social role patterns customary in Late Antiquity are upset and inverted by the author is not without consequences for the construction of his own 'self': Paulinus exchanges his role as petitioner, in the *commendatio*, for that of a teacher of asceticism, that of a patron, and that of inventor of the innovative hybrid rhetoric modelled in this very text. He appears as the benefactor of the ship-owner, helping him to regain his ship and his freight consignment, of the sailor Valgius, averting the prospect of torture and giving him a new life through baptism; he appears as benefactor of the *vicarius urbis*, donating a fascinating wondrous tale (*caelestis*

89 'Magic essentially belongs to religion (and, indeed, language)', see P. Schäfer and H.G. Kippenberg, eds., *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium* (Leiden, 1997), p. xi. According to Apuleius, *De magia* (*Apologia*) 26 (*1*), ed. and trans. J. Hammerstaedt (Darmstadt, 2002), p. 102, magic was an *ars … dis immortalibus accepta*. People are afraid to attack one whom they acknowledge to be so powerful, cf. Apuleius, *De magia* 26 (*6–7*), p. 104.

90 Paulinus (*Epist.* 49.3: note 33) is familiar with Cicero, cf. *De re publica* 1.2.2, ed. K. Ziegler (Leipzig, 1969), p. 3: *civitatis gubernatio; Pro Sestio* 20.46, ed. W. Peterson (Oxford, 1911), p. 156: *hanc rei publicae navem*. In his speech Cicero (*In Pisonem* 9.20, ed. A.C. Clark [Oxford 1909], p. 262) describes himself as the helmsman of the state (*qui in maximis turbidinibus ac fluctibus rei publicae navem gubernassem*). A further reference antedating the Christian symbolism is the *navis* of Horace's *Ode* 1.14 (ed. D.R. Shackleton Bailey [Berlin, 1985], pp. 17–18), the textbook example of the nautical allegory of statesmanship (Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 8.6.44, ed. D.A. Russell [Cambridge, Mass., 2003], p. 450).

91 See the expression *itinere terrena peregrinari* (above, n. 66). A further instance of a perilous 'pilgrimage' was the *Iter Nolanum* of Martinianus, whose ship foundered off Marseilles (Paulinus, *Carm.* 24, pp. 206–237).

historia) and a relic; and of the imputed guilty party, remitting all punishment. His conception of Christ, the Good Shepherd, is the model and paradigm for the bishop of Nola, who describes himself as a *pastor exigui gregis*, 'the pastor of a (relatively) small flock'.

The legal settlement that the bishop hoped to negotiate with the vicar demonstrates that the social status of literature and of education had scarcely changed at all from Cicero to the Christian intellectuals of Late Antiquity.[92] They, as Claudia Rapp[93] was able to demonstrate, did not live as far removed from the world or from classical literary traditions as they would sometimes like us to believe. The letter also serves to highlight the network of personal and social contacts within the educated Christian elite:[94] it may have included links to other prominent supporters of the ascetic movement—Augustine of Hippo, Rufinus of Aquileia, perhaps also Palladius, who later became bishop of Helenopolis.[95] But that is another topic.

92 See C.J. Classen, *Recht, Rhetorik, Politik: Untersuchungen zu Ciceros rhetorischer Strategie* (Darmstadt, 1985) and W. Stroh, *Taxis and Taktik: Die advokatische Dispositionskunst in Ciceros Gerichtsreden* (Stuttgart, 1975).

93 C. Rapp, "The Origins of Hagiography and the Literature of Early Monasticism: Purpose and Genre between Tradition and Innovation," in C. Kelly, R. Flower and M.S. Williams, eds., *Unclassical Traditions*, vol. 1: *Alternatives to the Classical Past in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2010), 119–130, at p. 130, on "Christian hagiographers".

94 It should be noted that even though a strong case can be made for Macarius, vicar of Rome, as the addressee of the letter, the reconstruction above does not stand or fall based on this identification. The points made would be largely equally valid even if the letter were addressed to some official other than Macarius.

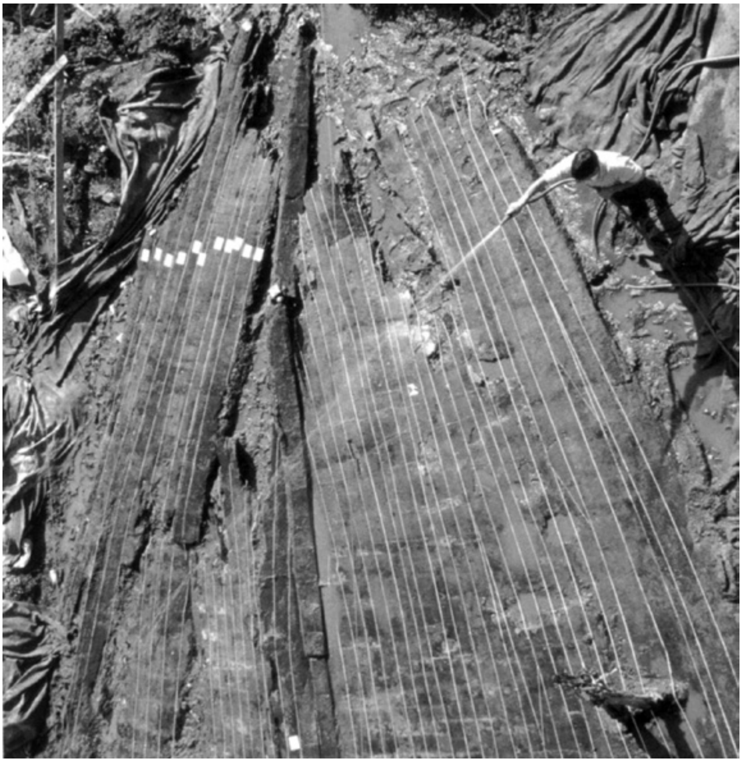
95 On Paulinus' network connections: Rufinus of Aquileia, after returning to Italy in 379, was in contact with a Macarius, *vir fide, eruditione, nobilitate clarus*, who sought Rufinus' advice on the astrologers and requested a translation of Origen's *Peri Archon* (Rufinus, *Apologia adversus Hieronymum* 1.11, ed. M. Simonetti (Corpus Christianorum. Series latina) 20 [Turnhout, 1961], p. 44, Praef. of *Peri Archon*; cf. Gennadius, *De viris illustribus* 28, ed. E.C. Richardson [Leipzig, 1896], p. 72). Palladius (*Historia Lausiaca* 62, ed. C. Butler [1868, repr. Hildesheim 1967], p. 157) refers in about 420 to a Macarius, a former *vicarius* (ἀπὸ βικαρίας), who gave away all his wealth: 'Both of these (Macarius as well as Constantius) were … notable and learned men who progressed to the highest love of God', ἄνδρες ἐπίσημοι καὶ λογικώτατοι καὶ εἰς ἄκρον ἐλάσαντες. According to Cornelius (Augustine, *Epist.* 259.1, ed. A. Goldbacher, CSEL 57, [Wien 1911], p. 611, 1–7), Paulinus of Nola wrote a (lost) *epistula consolatoria* to a Macarius on the death of the latter's wife. This statement could lend weight to the manuscript superscription by corroborating a friendship between Paulinus and a Macarius. See Trout, *Paulinus of Nola*, p. 188, and Mratschek, *Der Briefwechsel des Paulinus*, pp. 152–153, nn. 93–94 and pp. 380–384, contrasting Mussfeldt, "Bleibende Fragen," 213–214.

7 Illustrations Shipwrecks at Olbia: Remains of a Merchant Fleet sunk in the 5th Century

7.1 *List of Illustrations*

The author would like to thank Dr. Rubens d'Oriano and Eduardo Riccardi (Soprintendenza Archeologica di Olbia, Via Macereta Poltu Quadu, I-07037 Olbia) who have kindly given permission to reproduce these illustrations.

FIGURE 1 Baedeker Sardinien (*Ostfildern, 2010*), *p. 235. Photo Soprintendenza Archeologica di Olbia.*



FIGURES 2 AND 3 *Eduardo Riccardi, "Wracks und mehr aus dem Hafen von Olbia," Skyllis 4.2 (2001), 137. Photo Eduardo Riccardi, Soprintendenza Archeologica di Olbia.*

CHAPTER 9

A Hero in our Midst: Stilicho as a Literary Construct in the Poetry of Claudian

Clare Coombe

1 Introduction

Between 396 and 404 Claudian functioned as poetic spokesman at the court of Honorius, using his political poetry to propagate a positive view of his patron, the general Stilicho, who functioned as regent to Honorius. His poetry provides both a valuable historical source for the events of the late fourth century, and a problematic text for the historian on account of the methodological difficulties posed by the search for 'truth' in poems with an encomiastic purpose, and of the tendency for the poems' aesthetic, typical of the late antique style, to err away from traditional linear narrative. However, it is this aesthetic, with its taste for the static scene, speech and ecphrasis, which demands closer attention since, I shall argue, it is this which provides the means by which Claudian is able to transform occasional poetry with its basis in contemporary events into a vehicle for propagating a positive construct of Stilicho.[1] By means of the speeches, set scenes and descriptions, Claudian is able to convey a particular perspective on contemporary events and characters by recreating them in a story-world space constructed within each poem. Rather than attempting to strip away the veneer of poetics to interpret a skeleton of "facts" below, a better understanding of late fourth century political machinations can be gleaned from a focus upon the version of contemporary history (re)created in the poems by means of their imagery. It is specifically the use of vivid poetics that encourages the audience to accept the story-world being presented to them in the poems, and in doing so to engage with the version of real life being

1 This methodology, which recognizes the value of each independent "building block," regardless of whether it seems, at first sight, to be ornamental, finds its basis in the work of Michael Roberts, especially *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca, 1989). On reading the episodic structure of late antique narrative: M. Roberts, "The *Mosella* of Ausonius: An Interpretation," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 114 (1984), 343–353, and idem, "The Treatment of Narrative in Late Antique Literature: Ammianus Marcellinus (16.10), Rutilius Namatianus, and Paulinus of Pella," *Philologus* 132 (1988), 181–195.

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played out within that space. Mythological scenes and images are acceptable features of the epic-panegyric genre, conforming to the audience's basic expectations of the performance space for political poetry, and can therefore be manipulated and privileged so as to become signifiers of an overarching propagandistic message in each poem. Specifically, this imagery creates stories and story-worlds in which real life characters and events can be (re)created in order to engage and convince a political audience. To perform these works is to create a story which convinces of its reality through its (re)performance of familiar elements from real life, creating a vehicle for political propaganda within a poetic sphere.[2]

It is not the aim of this paper to argue that Claudian is paradigmatic of the role of poetry in the political sphere (albeit his influence on later poets may suggest that he becomes such), but to use his poetics as an example of the way in which poetry could be a tool for manipulating society in the fourth century. Specifically, the poetics are a lens which refracts the events and concerns of contemporary society. The key point here is not that Claudian is a panegyrist, albeit this is a significant element of his literary heritage, but that he is a poet, and it is the fundamental elements of his poetry, drawn principally from the epic tradition, though influenced by the late antique aesthetic, which he uses to transmit a political message to an audience who have come with particular expectations drawn from their experience of poetic performance. On the one hand, it is true to say that while enjoying the poetry, Claudian's audience were easy targets for absorbing the propaganda; one the other, however, this is to imply that the political impact of Claudian's poetry was a by-product of its success as poetry, which is not the case. The poetics both meet and deliberately manipulate the audience's existing expectations: while they open themselves to receive poetry, they are fed with compelling reworkings of real life politics which are designed to have an impact beyond the sphere of the performance. By means of his poetry, Claudian draws his audience into a story-world, within which they are encouraged to accept the particular view of political events and characters which he depicts. It is for this reason that he acts as Stilicho's principal mouthpiece, and does so via the vehicle of poetry.

2 By referring to Claudian as a propagandist, I am not suggesting that he did not have control over the content of his own works. Rather, I am arguing that he exploited his access to a political audience within a poetic performance space to transmit views that were beneficial to, but not necessarily dictated by, his patron. On Claudian as propagandist, see Alan Cameron, *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 30–45, and idem, "Claudian revisited," in F.E. Consolino, ed., *Letteratura e propaganda nell'Occidente latino da Augusto ai regni romano-barbarici* (Roma, 2000), pp. 127–144, at p. 133.

This paper examines one of the poetic constructs in Claudian's works, to serve as an example of how poetics can shape a political characterization: the portrayal of Stilicho. It argues that Claudian (re)creates the character of Stilicho within the story-world of the poems so that he appears as a hero or even a god through engagement with mythological imagery; his deeds are acted out as much upon a literary and mythological plane as upon a historical or mortal one, with heroes and gods battling with monsters while the universe hangs in the balance. By engaging with his audience within the sphere of poetic performance, Claudian is able to convince them of a positive view of Stilicho by means of the story-world character that he has created.[3] By examining three examples of this practice, I shall demonstrate that the central purpose of the poetry is the creation of these characters and worlds, and that this is how Claudian intended his work to function effectively as poetry, panegyric, and political propaganda.[4]

2 Apollo and Python

In the *In Rufinum*, Stilicho appears as a hero battling evil within a mythological story-world. This two book poem is written as an invective against Rufinus,

3 Although the texts have an important life as written documents, I deal first and foremost with their original performance for a very particular context which is often pointed out in a poem's preface. V. Zarini, "Les préfaces dans la poésie panégyrique de la latinité tardive," in B. Bureau and C. Nicolas, eds., *Commencer et finir: Débuts et fins dans les littératures Grecque, Latine et Néolatine* (Paris, 2008), pp. 175–186, at p. 181.

4 On the question of the genre of these panegyrical poems, generally now considered in terms of panegyrical epic or epic panegyric, see C. Ware, *Claudian and the Roman Epic Tradition* (Cambridge, 2012); S. Wheeler, "More Roman than the Romans of Rome: Virgilian (Self-)Fashioning in Claudian's Panegyric for the Consuls Olybrius and Probinus," in J.H.D. Scourfield and A. Chahoud, eds., *Texts and Culture in Late Antiquity: Inheritance, Authority, and Change* (Swansea, 2007), pp. 97–134; Zarini, "Les préfaces dans la poésie panégyrique," pp. 175–176; C. Schindler, *Per Carmina Laudes: Untersuchungen zur spätantiken Verspanegyrik von Claudian bis Coripp* (Berlin, 2009), pp. 59–172; and A. Gillett, "Epic Panegyric and Political Communication in the Fifth-Century West," in L. Grig and G. Kelly, eds., *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity* (New York, 2012), pp. 265–290. On panegyric in late antiquity more widely: S. MacCormack, "Latin Prose Panegyrics," in T.A. Dorey, ed., *Empire and Aftermath* (London, 1975), pp. 143–205; C.E.V. Nixon and B.S. Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The* Panegyrici Latini (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 1–3, 10–14; M. Whitby, ed., *The Propaganda of Power: The Role of Panegyric in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 1998); R. Rees, *Layers of Loyalty in Latin Panegyric, A.D. 289–307* (2002), pp. 6–19, 23–25; T. Hägg and P. Rousseau, eds., *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 2000).

prefect in the East, who was murdered by his own soldiers, but likely at the command of Stilicho (although he was not present), in November 395. Although it shares qualities with invective and historical epic, the poem is filled with mythological imagery which makes Rufinus a monster and Stilicho the hero who kills it; it opens with a preface in which Stilicho is transformed into Apollo, victorious over the slain Python. This opening scene provides a lens for reading the poem, in which contemporary events are (re)performed within a story-world. The historical characters of Stilicho and Rufinus, familiar from real life to the court audience, can be depicted as opposing forces of good and evil at a cosmic level because the audience accepts the mythological world entered in the preface. Habituation with occasional poetry and oratory provides a level of audience expectation which Claudian manipulates in order to encourage them to engage with a transformed account of Stilicho's relationship with Rufinus, played out in the poem's story-world.

In the *In Rufinum* Claudian constructs a story-world Stilicho in opposition to the character of his enemy, Rufinus, who had held power over Arcadius in the East and had used this influence to prevent Stilicho successfully crushing Alaric's forces in Greece in 395; it was the troops, commanded by Arcadius (at Rufinus' suggestion) to return from this campaign, who finally tore Rufinus apart. While not wanting to attribute the murder directly to Stilicho, Claudian aims to create a version of events in which ridding the world of Rufinus was an act of universal salvation, and which therefore should be associated with Stilicho, Rome's great hero and protector. Successfully convincing his audience to accept such a presentation, even within the poetic performance space, turns his poetry into a tool for pro-Stilicho propaganda.

The principal means for Claudian to present Stilicho to his audience as a hero in the *In Rufinum* is to depict his defeated enemy as a monstrous villain. The preface introduces them as Apollo and the dead Python. The scene makes a pointed engagement with the death of Rufinus, which Claudian will describe in the second book, where he both explicitly dissociates Stilicho from the act by his absence from the murder scene, and implicitly ascribes it to him through his influence over the angry men and the worthy intention behind the deed (*In Rufinum* 2.404–39). This opening lens in the Apollo-Python preface appropriately, therefore, focuses not on Apollo in the act of killing itself, as in the other main literary versions of the myth,[5] but with the effect upon the world that comes with ridding it of a monster. The story-world, freed from a monster,

5 In particular, Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.438–451, Statius, *Thebaid* 6.562–571, Lucan, *De Bello Civili* 6.497–509. For a full analysis of the Python myth see J. Fontenrose, *Python: A study of Delphic myth and its origins* (Berkeley, 1959).

clearly reflects and recreates the world of 'real life', which the audience is invited to see in this poem returned to freedom from Rufinus, also justly slain.

In describing the defeated Python, *domitus, decidit*, and *fudit* all give the impression of the monster fallen and spread across the ground, the opposite to the huge heights he reached while he dominated the region, invading even the stars to suggest a threat to the gods themselves:

> Phoebeo domitus Python cum decidit arcu
> membraque Cirrhaeo fudit anhela iugo,
> qui spiris tegeret montes, hauriret hiatu
> flumina, sanguineis tangeret astra iubis. (*In Rufinum* 1.pr. 1–4)

> When Python fell, conquered by Phoebus' bow,
> and spread his gasping limbs over Cirrha's ridges,
> who covered mountains with his coils, drained rivers
> with his open jaw, touched the stars with his bloody crest.[6]

The magnitude of the defeated monster and his devastating effect on the world are further emphasized by the jaws that could drain rivers: *hauriret hiatu/ flumina*. The effect of Python upon the mountains, stars and rivers is appropriate to a depiction of Rufinus as a universal danger, encouraging the audience to consider him not only as a negative force in the East, but a threat that had put the whole Roman world at risk. The effect is to attribute all of the problems of the empire to Rufinus, thus disproving any criticisms the audience may have had of Stilicho's power or his handling of the Visigothic threat to Rome.

Magnitude of monstrosity is made a defining feature of Rufinus in the rest of the poem, who threatens not one lake or island, like other monsters, but vast swathes of the world:

> hoc monstrum non una palus, non una tremebat
> insula, sed Latia quidquid dicione subactum
> vivit, et a primis Ganges horrebat Hiberis. (*In Rufinum* 1.291–93)

> Not one lake, nor one island trembled at this monster,
> but whatever lives subject to Latin sway,
> and shuddered from foremost Hiberus to the Ganges.

6 All Claudian citations are taken from Claudian, *Carmina*, ed. M. Platnauer (1922; repr. Cambridge, Mass., 1990). All translations are my own.

It is in this sense that Rufinus becomes a greater monster than those faced in Hercules' labours: greater than the lion of Cleonae which troubled just one wood, the boar in a single Arcadian valley, Antaeus, who stayed within Libya's borders, the fire-breathing bull, who threatened only Crete, or the Hydra, who was confined to Lerna's lake (*In Rufinum* 1.285–90). By means of this use of familiar mythological references, the audience is encouraged to accept the story-world and in doing so be drawn into an alternative political reality within the poem. Rufinus also shares Python's all-consuming jaws, a sign of greed and rapacity, against which Stilicho alone moves:

> solus medio sed turbine rerum
> contra letiferos rictus contraque rapacem
> movit tela feram. (*In Rufinum* 1.260–62)

> Only he, amid the whirlpool of these things
> raised arms against the death-bringing jaws
> and against the rapacious beast.

Like the snaky Python, Rufinus is depicted as a wild animal, a source of death and of universal chaos, signified by the use of *turbine*.[7] Yet he is also worse than all the most terrible monsters of mythology, including the most snaky and most ravenous, so that Stilicho, by implication, must be a greater hero than those who conquered these past threats which, even joining forces, cannot equal Rufinus:

> hoc neque Geryon triplex nec turbidus Orci
> ianitor aequabit nec si concurrat in unum
> vis hydrae Scyllaeque fames et flamma Chimaerae. (*In Rufinum* 1.294–96)

> Neither the triple Geryon nor the wild doorkeeper
> of Orcus will match him, nor if they were to join forces
> would the power of the hydra, the hunger of Scylla or the flames of the Chimaera.

7 *Turbo* is used repeatedly in Claudian as a symbol of chaos, both referring to the chaos brought by Rome's enemies and by war, and universal chaos signified by actual whirlpools: e.g. *In Rufinum* 2.90, *De Bello Gildonico* 502, *In Eutropium* 152, *De quarto consulatu Honorii augusti* 50, *De consulatu Stilichonis* 1.287.

In the preface, Claudian compares the poison which the monster spread with the purity which Apollo now brings, the poisoned spring and the effect on its surroundings reminding the audience of the poison and lies Rufinus had spread about Stilicho and the West among his court and in the ears of Arcadius, which become not merely personal to Stilicho but dangerous to the world:

> et qui vipereo spumavit saepe veneno
> Cephisos nitidis purior ibat aquis. (*In Rufinum* 1, pr. 9–10)
>
> and Cephisus, who often foamed with the viper's venom
> flowed more pure with glittering water.

The frothing of the venom is starkly contrasted with the flow of purer water, with the use of *nitidis* both vivid and reminiscent of the power of light which Apollo represents in victory over the forces of darkness.[8]

With the first fourteen lines of the preface having focused on the mythological scene, the final four make the explicit engagement between the mythological characters and their contemporary counterparts:

> nunc alio domini telis Pythone perempto … (*In Rufinum* 1.pr. 15)
>
> now that another Python is dead at the weapons of the master …

Stilicho remains unnamed, but the integration of the mythological plane with the poetic depiction of the real world is clear, emphasized by the repetition of Python's name, from pr. 1, in the introduction of *alio … Pythone* in pr. 15. Away from the mythological plane, Claudian avoids the direct attribution of Rufinus' death to Stilicho per se,[9] but here the destruction of the so-called monster is made clear in *perempto*.[10] However, the creation of an isolated episode in the preface in which Stilicho is so clearly a dragon-slayer protecting his people (far-removed from politically-motivated homicide) creates a distinct world

8 Python's poison is also emphasized in the *Panegyricus dictus Probino et Olybrio consulibus*, in which Phoebus' weapon drips *nigrum venenum* after slaying the snake, making him a source not only of contaminating poison, but black poison at that. For the use of *niger* with connotations of fear and death, J. André, *Étude sur les termes de couleur dans la langue latine* (Paris, 1949), p. 57.

9 Ware, *Claudian*, pp. 44–45.

10 At *In Rufinum* 2.402–403, when the first soldier attacks Rufinus, he does so in Stilicho's name, but the killing is not explicitly connected with Stilicho.

within which the poem functions, but one which simultaneously (re)creates real life. The scene of the last four lines of the prologue further establishes the parallel between the story-world of Apollo and Python and the real-life world in which the audience exists:

auditoque procul Musarum carmine dulci
ad Themidis coeunt antra seuera dei.

Nunc alio domini telis Pythone perempto
convenit ad nostram sacra caterva lyram,
qui stabilem servans Augustis fratribus orbem
iustitia pacem, viribus arma regit. (*In Rufinum* 1.pr. 11–18)

and, having heard from far off the sweet song of the Muses,
the gods gather in the forbidding caves of Themis.

Now that another Python is dead at the weapons of the master,
a holy company comes together at my lyre,
who, preserving a stable world for the brother Emperors,
rules peace with justice and war with strength.

Just as the gods gather at the caves of Themis (pr. 14), called by the song of the Muses (pr. 13), so the *sacra caterva* come together at Claudian's lyre, implicitly gathering in the real place and situation in which Claudian is reciting his poem (pr. 16). Likewise, as the whole region rang with cries of celebration and the singing of Phoebus' name (pr. 11), so Claudian will reflect such hero worship in his praise of Stilicho whose role in the poem is set out by his depiction in the prologue's final two lines (pr. 17–18), preserving a stable world for Honorius and Arcadius, and ruling with justice and strength. This final image establishes the role of the hero, engaging the story-world with the real-life Stilicho, who slays monsters in order that the world may remain stable, not for his own sake but for the sake of the emperors he serves. The reference to the brother emperors emphasizes that his task is universal, and that in saving the world from Rufinus he has done his duty both to Honorius and, unlike Rufinus, also to Arcadius.[11]

11 A number of ancient sources, in particular Zosimus, lend some support to the claim that Theodosius made Stilicho regent, in some sense, of both Honorius and Arcadius. Cf. E. Demougeot, *De l'unité à la division de l'empire Romain, 395–410* (Paris, 1951), p. 102; Alan Cameron, "Theodosius the Great and the Regency of Stilico," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 73 (1969), 274–280, at pp. 274–275.

Likewise, as we enter the poem proper, this duty and his role as story-world hero will combine, so that he literally holds up the very world:

> qua dignum te laude feram, qui paene ruenti
> lapsuroque tuos umeros obieceris orbi? (*In Rufinum* 1.273–74)
>
> How may I praise you worthily, who have cast your shoulders
> beneath a world about to fall tumbling headlong?

However, there is a greater significance to Claudian's integration of the world of 'real life' and the story-world in the preface, as it not only makes explicit a link between the main characters of each, it also places the audience, the *sacra caterva*, inside the poem as the gods gathering at Themis' cave, encouraging them to recognize the influence of the monster Python-Rufinus that they have themselves suffered. It is no longer merely an abstract story-world within a poem, but a story of which they are themselves a part, the metapoetics of the preface blurring the line between the story within the poem and the events without.

The initial construct of Stilicho is therefore as another Apollo but specifically as the hero who stands in opposition to the Python-figure of Rufinus. The construct of Rufinus as a snaky figure of darkness, recalling Python, continues when Claudian tells the story of his upbringing by the Furies and their influence over him, and thus continues to affect how the audience is led to view the character of Stilicho and the significance of Rufinus' defeat.[12] Claudian introduces an infernal council, an inversion of the epic *concilium deorum*, in which Allecto proposes a revolt against the golden age which is beginning upon earth and the harmony of the universe under the rule of Jupiter.[13] Megaera tempers her plan of open rebellion against the gods, suggesting instead that Rufinus be used as the tool to undo the right balance of the world and destroy its inhabitants. She introduces Rufinus as a monster, *est mihi prodigium* (*In Rufinum*

12 On Claudian's Furies, see P. Fabbri, "Il genio del male nella poesia di Claudiano," *Athenaeum* 6 (1918), 48–61, at pp. 52–53, H. Levy, "Two Notes on Claudian's *In Rufinum*," *American Journal of Philology* 68 (1947), 64–73, at pp. 70–71.

13 The *concilium deorum* is a favoured motif in Claudian's work; see C. Gruzelier, *Claudian: De Raptu Proserpinae* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 237–238; A. Bruzzone, "Il 'concilium deorum' nella poesia panegiristica latina da Claudiano a Sidonio Apollinare," in A.M. Taragna, ed., *La poesia tardoantica e medievale: Atti del ii convegno internazionale di studi, Perugia, 15–16 novembre 2001* (Alessandria, 2004), pp. 129–141. For the motif more widely: M. Hammond, "'Concilia deorum' from Homer through Milton," *Studies in Philology* 30: 1 (1933), 1–16.

1.89), comparing him to the Hydra, which is expanded later in the poem when he is said to outdo the triple Geryon, Cerberus, Hydra, Scylla and Chimaera (*In Rufinum* 1.294–96). In particular, he becomes further associated with snaky monsters through the suggestion that Megaera's snakes shaped him wth their tongues as a baby, the licking image both associated with animals nursing their young and with the poisonous venom of the snake introduced in the preface:[14]

> linguisque trisulcis
> mollia lambentes finxerunt membra cerastae. (*In Rufinum* 1.95–96)

> and the snakes shaped
> his tender limbs, licking with their triple-forked tongues.

Repeated references to snakes remind the reader of the image of Python from the preface, who is himself reminiscent of the Giants, depicted with snakes' tails in Claudian's accounts, and thus a favourite image reminiscent of cosmic chaos and an attack on heaven.[15] Further to the snaky connotations of the Furies, the character traits with which Megaera's nursing provided Rufinus are those with which the Furies of book 1 are also portrayed by means of their proposed plot:

> meque etiam tradente dolos artesque nocendi
> edidicit: simulare fidem sensusque minaces
> protegere et blando fraudem praetexere risu,
> plenus saevitiae lucrique cupidine fervens. (*In Rufinum* 1.97–100)

> Indeed, from my teaching he learned treachery and the skills
> to hurt, to pretend sincerity and conceal the sense of threat,
> and to cover over deceit with an alluring smile,
> full of savagery and burning with lust for gain.

14 The Furies in Claudian's poetry are notably snaky, the snakes used to reflect their moods as well as their appearance. See especially *In Rufinum* 1.42–43, 1.66–67, 1.118.

15 Claudian's giants are also depicted in terms of their sheer size, just like Python: their snakes lick even the stars, just as Python's bloody crest touches them (cf. *De Bello Getico* 66), and as Python covers whole mountains with his coils, the giants are able to pluck up whole mountains for weapons (cf. *De bello Getico* 64–65). For early examples of theomachy featuring dragons and an analysis on the wider relationship between portrayals of Python, Typhon and the giants, see Fontenrose, *Python*, pp. 239–242.

She also adds that he has outdone even her in his capacity for evil (*In Rufinum* 1.109–11), his wickedness combining all the Furies' together. This story-world (re)telling of Rufinus' upbringing is drawn from the standard content of the invective, in accordance with the audience's expectations, but reworks the theme so that it creates a story-world monster. The effect is to encourage the audience to accept the account as part of a normal piece of occasional poetry, and in doing so to convince them of Rufinus' threatening evil powers.

The monster Rufinus obviously magnifies the heroism of Stilicho in so far as he is an appropriate enemy for the story, but Claudian also supplies a particular world for the hero to protect, again encouraging the audience to accept the version of their world that they find presented within the poem. In their attack, the Furies intend to replace light with dark, replace land with sea and *rerum vexare fidem*, overturn the right order of the universe:

> iam cupio Stygiis invadere nubibus astra,
> iam flatu violare diem, laxare profundo
> frena mari, fluvios ruptis inmittere ripis
> et rerum vexare fidem. (*In Rufinum* 1.62–65)
>
> I long now to attack the stars with Stygian cloud,
> now to violate the daylight with our breath, to loosen the reins
> from the depths of the sea, to launch the rivers against their broken banks
> and to shake nature to its foundations.

The manifestation of their proposed revolt is appropriate to the universe Claudian portrays, but also incorporates ideas of chaos which might really seem to reflect feared threats to the Roman world from a split empire and threatened borders, and belief in demonic forces.[16] This cosmic construct is introduced in the proemic opening to book 1 when, immediately after describing the fall of Python, Claudian undertakes a comparison of (broadly) Epicurean and Stoic views of the universe, concluding that his belief in the gods' care for the world and its divine ordering has been restored by the fate of Rufinus (*In Rufinum* 1.1–24). The terms with which he describes the universe recall the four elements, each in its rightful place,[17] and the correct balance of light and dark, the opposite of what both the Furies and Python had aimed to achieve:

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16 On real belief in such forces, see P. James, "Taceat superata uetustas: Living Legends in Claudian's *In Rufinum* 1," in Whitby, ed., *The Propaganda of Power*, pp. 151–175.

17 This balance may recall the Stoic theory of *sympatheia* in which the cosmos is understood to be a united whole, held together by its very nature and in sympathy with each of its

nam cum dispositi quaesissem foedera mundi
praescriptosque mari fines annisque meatus
et lucis noctisque vices: tunc omnia rebar
consilio firmata dei, qui lege moveri
sidera, qui fruges diverso tempore nasci,
qui variam Phoeben alieno iusserit igni
compleri Solemque suo, porrexerit undis
litora, tellurem medio libraverit axe. (*In Rufinum* 1.4–11)

For when I investigated the bonds of the ordered world
and the appointed boundaries of the sea and course for the years
and alternation of daylight and night-time: then I supposed everything
to be maintained by the purpose of God, who ordered the stars
to move by regulation, the crops to grow in different seasons,
changeable Phoebe to be filled with another's flame
and the sun with his own. He extended the shore to the waves,
and poised the earth in the midst of the heavens.

The concept of the correctly ordered universe which Rufinus threatens is explicitly introduced with *dispositi… foedera mundi*. However, the constituent parts of the *mundus* are introduced to suggest the correct balance for a harmonized universe: *lucis, sidera* and *ignis* suggest fire, *mari* and *undis* water, *litora* and *tellurem* refer to earth with *lucis noctisque vices* and *sidera* suggesting air through their location, supported by *axe*.[18] The juxtaposition of a doctrine which Claudian claims is right over one which weakens faith in the gods and their rule (*In Rufinum* 1.14–19) and is thus wrong parallels the concept of the ordered universe with the force of right (as introduced in the dualism of the preface), and the concept of chaos with the force of evil. By associating Rufinus directly with the forces of evil, Stilicho joins the side of the gods and the force of right. To follow this reasoned revelation about the cosmos with the netherworld council in which the primary desire of Allecto is the release of chaos to destroy the ordered *placidas urbes* (1.26) couples the negativity of a world in which the elements are not harmonized with the action of the evil forces which threaten such a result. The absolution of the gods from moral

constituent parts. The use of the motif in late antiquity is explored in M. Lapidge, "A Stoic Metaphor in Late Latin Poetry: The Binding of the Cosmos," *Latomus* 39 (1980), 817–837.

18 This elemental reading is developed from that proposed by H. Funke, "The universe of Claudian. Its Greek Sources, v," in F. Cairns, ed., *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar*, vol. 5 (Liverpool, 1986), pp. 357–366, at pp. 358–359.

neutrality at 1.21 puts them into the role of antitheses to the Furies, another facet of the force of 'good' within Claudian's universe. The fact that Claudian uses the image of the *concilium deorum* in reverse to portray the Furies adds to the notion that they are a dangerous alternative to the gods.

The upheaval to world order is appropriately manifested in an act of boundary breakdown by Megaera. As she bursts forth into the upper world she corrupts the rays of the sun, a representation of the evil-good conflict in terms of darkness and light. There are again hints of the breakdown of elemental boundaries with *radios* suggesting fire, *aethera* the air, *arva* the earth and *Tethys* and *Rhenus* the water:

> hinc dea prosiluit Phoebique egressa serenos
> infecit radios ululatuque aethera rupit
> terrifico: sentit ferale Britannia murmur
> et Senonum quatit arva fragor revolutaque Tethys
> substitit et Rhenus proiecta torpuit urna. (*In Rufinum* 1.129–133)
>
> Here the goddess burst out and coming forth darkened
> the bright sunbeams and rent the air with a terrible howl:
> Britain felt the deadly roar
> and the noise shook the land of the Senones; Tethys stopped her
> turning and the Rhine fell still with his urn cast down.

Megaera later (in a debate with her counterpart in this world of opposites, Iustitia) claims earth for her lot as she makes it her realm through Rufinus:

> linque homines sortemque meam, pete sidera ... (*In Rufinum* 1.363)
>
> Leave men and my lot, head for the stars ...

the term suggesting now the tripartite division of the world between the major deities, from which she is stealing a share, and recalling Rufinus' stolen influence over the eastern empire.[19] Importantly, Claudian finally reverses the breakdown of boundaries with Rufinus' descent into hell, by which the earth is freed and light is released from Rufinus' darkness:

19 This reading of *sors* is proposed by H. Levy, *Claudian's In Rufinum: An Exegetical Commentary* (Cleveland, 1971), p. 105.

senserunt convexa necem tellusque nefandum
amolitur onus iam respirantibus astris. (*In Rufinum* 2.454–55)

The heavens felt his death and the earth is released
from her abominable burden, now that the stars can breathe.

The stars were also freed with Apollo/Stilicho's slaying of Python, reminding the audience again that it is Stilicho who can be held responsible for this reordering of the universe to its harmonized state.

3 Stilicho as Phoenix

It is not only the use of wider themes by which the characters and worlds are created for the audience, but by as little as a single vivid image as part of these uniting wider ideas; if such an image is understood not to be a mere ornament but rather a privileged element in which the key ideas being propagated by the poet are encapsulated, the power of this poetry for propagandistic ends can be better understood. One such image is the phoenix (*De Consulatu Stilichonis* 2.409–23). The simile compares the phoenix to Stilicho returning to Rome, and the gathering birds to the past leaders who gather to celebrate (*De consulatu Stilichonis* 2.412–13 cf. 418–20). However, the specific focus of the image is the rebirth of the phoenix and the ashes it carries:

sic ubi fecunda reparavit morte iuventam
et patrios idem cineres collectaque portat
unguibus ossa piis Nilique ad litora tendens
unicus extremo Phoenix procedit ab Euro. (*De consulatu Stilichonis* 2.414–17)

In the same way, when the Phoenix has renewed its youth by its fruitful death,
and the same bird carries the bones and gathered ashes of its father
in its pious talons, directing its course from the extreme East,
it proceeds to the shore of the Nile, the only one of its kind.

Stilicho is not returning as consul, but consul for the first time (having rejected the consulship under Theodosius, according to Claudian *De consulatu Stilichonis* 2.233–34) and Claudian does not suggest that he has 'ashes' from his father or predecessor to return to Rome. However, Claudian makes reference

to the *fasces vetusti* (412) and to the illustrious predecessors of Stilicho, as well as to the (now divine) Theodosii (421–422), establishing a tradition into which Stilicho steps as consul. In this sense, the tradition of the consulship represents a constant rebirth of Rome and the tradition of Rome, as well as the rebirth of the leader in the form of consul.[20] By reference to the phoenix, therefore, Claudian transforms the consulship for his readers into a confirmation that Stilicho is a hero-leader within a great line, as well as a force of rejuvenation and immortality for Rome.[21]

The phoenix achieves its position through natural order, its own birth from its father's ashes (emphasized by the lingering smell of incense: *odorati redolent cui cinnama busti*, 420), and such a comparison perhaps draws attention away from Stilicho's own Vandal heritage and his attempts to integrate his family line with the royal line through his own marriage and the wedding of his daughter to the emperor Honorius.[22] The phoenix is also returning to its spiritual home in the extreme East, its intrinsic association with this place creating a similar association for Stilicho with Rome, to which he returns as consul. However, the emphasis on the uniqueness of the bird suggests that this is more than just a consulship. Rather it is a position of unique power, the emphasis on kingship apparent when the wider connotations of the phoenix image are considered. This can be achieved through a comparison with poem 27 of the *Carmina Minora* (*Carm.min.*), Claudian's poem dedicated to the subject of the phoenix.

The similarities between the imagery of *De consulatu Stilichonis* 2 and *Carm. min.* 27 suggest that this is the version of the phoenix myth that Claudian had in mind. In the equivalent scene in *Carm. min.* 27 there is even greater emphasis on power and leadership, with a comparison made between the phoenix and a Parthian chief:[23]

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20 See P.J.E. Davies, "The Phoenix and the Flames: Death, Rebirth and the Imperial Landscape of Rome," *Mortality* 5: 3 (2000), 237–258, at p. 253.

21 U. Keudel, *Poetische Vorlaüfer und Vorbilder in Claudians De consulatu Stilichonis* (Göttingen, 1970), p. 100; B. Bauer, *Der Phönix im Vergleich zweier spätantiker Gedichte und seine Funktion als Allegorie Claudian* (München, 2010), p. 21.

22 On family integration: wedding of Honorius and Maria: *Epithalamium de nuptiis Honorii Augusti* especially 319–341; Maria's predicted offspring and suggestion of marriage of Eucherius to Galla Placidia: *De consulatu Stilichonis* 2.339–361; suggestion that Eucherius was acknowledged as a grandson by Theodosius *De consulatu Stilichonis* 3.176–177 (Cameron, *Claudian*, p. 47).

23 M.L. Ricci, *Claudius Claudianus Phoenix* (*Carm. Min. 27*) (Bari, 1981), p. 98; F. Lecocq, "Le phénix chez Claudien: La fin d'un mythe. Pour une lecture politique du phénix: Quelques

protinus ad Nilum manes sacrare paternos
auctoremque globum Phariae telluris ad oras
ferre iuvat . . .
talis barbaricas flavo de Tigride turmas
ductor Parthus agit: gemmis et divite cultu
luxurians sertis apicem regalibus ornat. (*Carm. min.* 27.72–4; 83–5)

Immediately, he delights to consecrate his father's soul by the Nile
and to carry the ball of his creator's ashes to the shores
of the Egyptian land. . . .
Just so, the Parthian chief leads his barbarous bands
down from the yellow Tigris: revelling in gems and rich ornament
he adorns his crown with royal garlands.

Both passages contain the striking image of birds flocking to watch,[24] specifically including the eagle, surely in its role as the bird of Jupiter a parallel for the chiefs who gather to Stilicho, a greater leader still:

conveniunt aquilae cunctaeque ex orbe volucres,
ut Solis mirentur avem; (*De consulatu Stilichonis* 2.418–19)

Eagles gather, and the birds of the world all together,
to marvel at the bird of the Sun;

cf.
innumerae comitantur aves stipatque volantem
alituum suspensa cohors. exercitus ingens
obnubit vario late convexa meatu.
nec quisquam tantis e milibus obvius audet
ire duci, sed regis iter fragrantis adorant. (*Carm. min.* 27.76–80)

Countless birds attend him and a hanging multitude gathers
around him, flying high. The huge flock widely veils the heavens
on its changing course.
But none from so many thousands dares to fly in the way of the leader,
but they honour the journey of their sweet-smelling king.

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arguments," in F. Garambois-Vasquez, ed., *Claudien: Mythe, histoire et science* (Saint-Étienne, 2011), pp. 113–157, at p. 117.

24 Keudel, *Poetische Vorlaüfer und Vorbilder*, p. 99.

The gathering of birds for the phoenix's appearance is not unique to Claudian, and has been used to justify that the phoenix is king of birds.[25] There are clearly striking parallels between this motif of the phoenix myth and images of the assumption of power in panegyric, and it has been suggested that the congregating of birds and ceremonial following of the phoenix may have been drawn from traditional descriptions of such events.[26] Claudian's use of the image would certainly confirm this, especially bearing in mind the similarities between his political panegyrics and his poem on the phoenix.

If the flight home and the gathering of birds reflect the role of the leader, the physical description of the phoenix adds to the construction of Stilicho as in some way divine. *De consulatu Stilichonis* 2 creates a relationship between Stilicho and Sol which amplifies the association of Stilicho and the phoenix. It is Sol who goes to collect the golden year from the cave of time for Stilicho's consulship, delivers a speech upon the consulship and seems in some way responsible for the final moments in the poem when the stars begin their course to inscribe Stilicho into the sky, viewed from the garden of the Sun (*De consulatu Stilichonis* 2.422–23, 441–76). In a poem which opened with a cosmological scene in which Clementia, in turn associated with Stilicho, separated light from chaos, such a theme and association with light is hardly surprising (*De consulatu Stilichonis* 2.9–11). The phoenix as it appears across the poems features a number of divine attributes suitable to the depiction of Stilicho. The amazing appearance of the bird is discussed at length at *Carm. min.* 27.17–22, in which it is closely associated with light and fire, its eye flashing with a mysterious flame, a fiery beauty ringing its head. It is described as shining with the light of the sun and as being able to cut through the darkness. The rest of it is brightly coloured in purple, blue and gold.

Such divine attributes, including also its close relationship with Sol, emphasize the phoenix's place as king of birds and its associations with the divine world as well as the mortal. Both these features are appropriate to the parallel in *De consulatu Stilichonis* 2 with Stilicho, both as mortal leader and as

25 Achilles Tatius (3.25.5), for example, compares the phoenix to a king journeying into a foreign country because the choir of birds with it acts like a body guard. Lecocq, "Le phénix chez Claudien," p. 123; Ricci, *Claudius Claudianus Phoenix*, p. 98; cf. I. Gualandri, "Un papiro milanese, Lattanzio, Claudiano e il mito della fenice," *Rendiconti della Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche dell'Accademia dei Lincei* 29 (1974), 293–311, at p. 296 n. 18.

26 See R. van den Broek, *The Myth of the Phoenix, according to Classical and Early Christian Traditions*, trans. I.W. Seeger (Leiden, 1971), p. 193; Lecocq, "Le phénix chez Claudien" p. 142.

mythological hero, and are briefly picked out by reference to the fact that the phoenix is the *avis Solis* (419), it comes from the mysterious *extremus Eurus* (417) and all the other birds have cause to marvel at it (419). Here, too, the appearance of the phoenix is referred to, its miraculous flaming plumage distinguishing it from normal mortal birds. The bird's striking appearance is also appropriate in a poem in which the consular cloak given to Stilicho is similarly of particular significance to how he is depicted, featuring an elaborate ecphrasis of Stilicho's future as a divine, fated plan (*De consulatu Stilichonis* 2.330–61).[27]

A further facet to the depiction of the phoenix by Claudian is its association with paradise and its influence over its surroundings, used to create the effect that Stilicho will have over the empire and people during his consulship. *De consulatu Stilichonis* 2.422–452 contains a scene in which Sol visits the Cave of Time to select a golden year for Stilicho's consulship, a scene which makes explicit the permeating theme of a coming golden age and which abounds with symbols of cyclicality, eternity and the laws of fate. The theme establishes Stilicho as the bringer of a golden age and the creator of paradise for Rome at a time when its harmony is under threat from multiple angles. One aspect of this theme is demonstrated by the phoenix who, in *Carm. min.* 27, influences the birds around him to fly without attacking one another.[28] The eagle is specifically mentioned here by Claudian and also appears in the phoenix simile of *De consulatu Stilichonis* 2, suggesting that Claudian has the same scene in mind with the same harmony existing between the birds. Such a theme of a time when the lion lies down with the lamb is one familiar in images of golden age and paradise, in particular Virgil *Eclogue* 4.22. Claudian directly engages with concerns regarding the disunited empire and the handling of the barbarian threat, to transform Stilicho's consulship, for the poem's audience, into a year of golden age peace with associations of paradise.

Associations of the phoenix with paradise occur in its other appearances, which Claudian might expect to resonate for his audience when he presents Stilicho as phoenix. In other versions of the myth, the phoenix is directly associated with mythical Panchaia.[29] In the *De Raptu Proserpinae* (*Rapt.*), Claudian's mythological epic, Aetna prays to Zephyrus for sweet-scented breezes, associating the phoenix with the incense and wood of the Sabaeans,

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27 Roberts, *The Jeweled Style*, p. 114.

28 This image may be based upon (pseudo?-)Lactantius *De Ave Phoenice* 155–156, or a shared tradition (cf. Gualandri, "Un papiro milanese").

29 See Van den Broek, *The Myth of the Phoenix*, pp. 189–190 and 325–326; K.N. Harris, *The* De Ave Phoenice *of Lactantius* (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1976), pp. 84–85.

alongside references to the spices of the Hydaspes and the incense of Panchaia (*Rapt*. 2.78–86). A sweet-smelling paradise is also a feature of Venus' paradisiacal abode in Claudian's *Epithalamium de nuptiis Honorii Augusti*, in which Panchaia is also specifically named (*Epithalamium de nuptiis Honorii Augusti* 92–96).

The home of the phoenix in *Carm. min*. 27 also has associations with paradise:[30]

> haec fortunatus nimium Titanius ales
> regna colit solusque plaga defensus iniqua
> possidet intactas aegris animalibus oras
> saeva nec humani patitur contagia mundi. (*Carm. min.* 27.7–10)

> The most blessed bird of the Sun dwells in this kingdom
> and alone, defended by the hostile region,
> is master of borders unstained by the ills of beasts;
> nor does it suffer harsh pollution from the world of men.

Although it is described as remote and mysterious, hostile to the rest of the world, it is a sanctuary removed from mortal cares.[31] It is also a place of light, symbolic of the force of good as in the depiction of Stilicho in the *In Rufinum*, in which the day blushes as she ventures out and night is lightened and sheds her dark cloak:

> unde rubet ventura dies longeque coruscis
> nox adflata rotis refugo pallescit amictu. (*Carm. min*. 27.5–6)

> hence the day, coming forth, blushes,
> and night, lifted on those far-shining wheels, grows paler in her fading cloak.

This association with light and the sun is also reflected in the appearance of the bird whose crest, shining with the light of the sun, cuts through the darkness (19–22). Likewise its eye flashes with fire, it is crowned in flame (17–18), and it feeds off the sun (14–15) just as the sun that will restore it to life from the ashes (63–64). All this surely appears in the background of the phoenix to

30 On the opening to this poem, see I. Gualandri, *Aspetti della tecnica compositiva in Claudiano* (Milan, 1968), pp. 42–43; eadem, "Un papiro milanese," p. 303.

31 A *locus amoenus*: Ricci, *Claudius Claudianus Phoenix*, p. 3.

which Stilicho is compared, with its flaming plumage and scent of spices (*De consulatu Stilichonis* 2.419–20). By drawing his audience into his story-world by means of the phoenix image, Claudian is able to exploit their expectations of that image to construct a version of Stilicho as the restorer of a golden age.

4 Stilicho and Tiphys

The presentation of Stilicho as a divine and miraculous king of birds is one of the more unusual mythological engagements for the character. I conclude, therefore, with an example in which Stilicho is reinvented as Tiphys, helmsman of the Argo; in the proem to the *De Bello Getico*, the deeds of Stilicho in the war are introduced in terms of the voyage and adventures of the Argonauts based around Tiphys as the initial point of reference:[32]

> intacti cum claustra freti, coeuntibus aequor
> armatum scopulis, audax inrumperet Argo
> Aeetam Colchosque petens, propiore periclo
> omnibus attonitis, solus post numina Tiphys
> incolumem tenui damno servasse carinam
> fertur et ancipitem montis vitasse ruinam
> deceptoque vagae concursu rupis in altum
> victricem duxisse ratem;
> . . . quod si ardua Tiphyn
> navis ob innocuae meritum sic gloria vexit,
> quae tibi pro tanti pulso discrimine regni
> sufficient laudes, Stilicho? (*De bello Getico* 1–8; 12–15)

> When the bold Argo burst through the opening
> to the untouched strait, the sea guarded by clashing rocks,
> seeking Aeetes and Colchis, it is said that, when all were stunned
> by the nearing danger, Tiphys alone after the gods
> kept the ship safe with little damage
> and avoided the two-sided in-rush of the mountain
> and having deceived the meeting of the roving cliffs

32 On the possible sources and models for the myth and its use, see C. Schindler, "Claudians 'Argonautica': Zur Darstellung und Funktion des Mythos zu Beginn des Epos *De bello Getico* (1–35)," in M. Cuypers and A. Harder, eds., *Beginning from Apollo: Studies in Apollonius Rhodius and the Argonautic Tradition* (Louvain, 2005), pp. 107–123.

> led the victorious ship into the deep.
> . . . But if the merit of an unharmed ship
> brought Tiphys such great glory,
> what praises will suffice for you, Stilicho, having driven out
> danger from so great a kingdom?

Although the choice of Tiphys—who features little if at all in some accounts of the myth of the Argo—may seem surprising, in particular for having been chosen over Jason, there are several important connotations to the choice. In the Symplegades episode used by Claudian, Tiphys is depicted, especially by Apollonius, as the saviour of the ship (and all the other Argonauts), a success which Claudian parallels with the saving of an empire (and all her people) (*De bello Getico* 11–14). The threat to the ship is a speeding mass of external power which will cause destruction no ship can resist, an image which suits Claudian's depiction of the barbarian threat to all Roman defences (*De bello Getico* 213–17). To defeat them Tiphys is actively aided by divine favour, as Stilicho is in other poems.[33] The parallel emphasizes Stilicho's skill as leader and steersman of Rome, just as Tiphys overcomes the Symplegades by his skill: *arte viri domitae*? (*De bello Getico* 9).[34]

The preface provides not only a means for reading the character of Stilicho, but a lens for the entire poem. By beginning with the Argo, the audience's expectations are of a tale of heroes and they are drawn into a story-world based upon these expectations. Within this story-world, Stilicho and his actions can be transformed to correspond to the positive actions of hero saving Rome, fulfilling a propagandistic function which is accepted because it occurs at the level of the familiar mythological plane. However, there is a further aspect to characterizing Stilicho as Tiphys in particular which links to the characterization of him as the paradise-bringing Phoenix of *De consulatu Stilichonis* 2. The golden age imagery of Claudian's poetry is clearly influenced by that of Virgil's *Georgics* but also particularly by his fourth *Eclogue*. One of Claudian's primary concerns in the *De bello Getico* is to convince his audience that the events of

33 E.g. *De Bello Gildonico* 417–420, *In Rufinum* 1.34053, *In Eutropium* 2.103–232. Through the comparison there is also significance to the image of Stilicho as steersman, just as he is navigator in *De Consulatu Stilichonis* (1.28–90) and Theodosius teaches ruling like steering a ship in the *Panegyricus de quarto consulatu Honorii Augusti* (419–427). The theme recurs in *De Bello Getico* as a feature of the great leaders of the past who knew how to handle the reins of government (*De bello Getico* 118–119).

34 The characteristic is reiterated later by comparison between a great leader and a surgeon (*De bello Getico* 120–123).

the poem will transform Rome to a golden age state. Stilicho's speech at 560–578 states not only that this is the opportunity to save a tottering Rome, but that this will be the battle to end all battles:

> uno tot proelia vincite bello.
> Romanum reparate decus molemque labentis
> imperii fulcite umeris; hic omnia campus
> vindicat, haec mundo pacem victoria sancit. (*De bello Getico* 570–73)
>
> Win so many battles in one war.
> Restore Rome's glory and support the weight of a tottering empire
> on your shoulders. This battle frees everything;
> this victory confirms peace in the world.

Eclogue 4 states two requirements for the return of the golden age: that there will be war and that there will be a second Argo:

> alter erit tum Tiphys et altera quae vehat Argo
> delectos heroas; erunt etiam altera bella
> atque iterum ad Troiam magnus mittetur Achilles. (Virgil *Ecl.* 4.34–36)[35]
>
> Then there will be another Tiphys and another Argo
> which carries chosen heroes; there will even be other wars
> and again great Achilles will be sent to Troy.

Perhaps it is little wonder that the soldiers are so keen for war (604–08) or that Claudian depicts a Rome falling from greatness, for both are requirements that the peace that follows will be a golden age.[36] Stilicho, as Tiphys, will have steered his ship, as *Eclogue* 4 prophesies and as the Argo preface has indicated, and with the coming of peace the golden age will return.

5 Conclusion

Much of the imagery examined above has been stripped away by critics approaching Claudian to glean historical information about the events he depicts; however, a close reading of the poetics demonstrates that poetry is

35 Virgil, *Eclogues*, ed. Fairclough, H. Rushton, rev. G.P. Goold (London, 1990).

36 Ware, *Claudian*, p. 225 on the necessity of war for the golden age.

being manipulated to influence the audience's view of politics and the depiction of their leader. The expectations the audience have when they enter the story-world of epic poetry leave them open to accepting the propagandistic depiction of Stilicho as he appears within that story-world. By means of his poetry, Claudian reinvents the world within which the historical events are played out, transferring them to a mythological plane in which the enemy becomes a monster from hell, the sphere under threat is not Rome or the empire but the very cosmos, and the return of a golden age is fated. Only within such a poetic world can Stilicho function as Claudian intends him to, reinvented as hero of mythological or epic stature or as a dragon-slaying god upon earth, and only by application of the audience's expectations of epic poetry to the transmission of propaganda are they open to accepting such a depiction. The poetic images function as signifiers for a wider political message in favour of Stilicho, which is transmitted to the audience when they engage with the version of events played out within the story-world at the point that they enter the familiar space of poetic performance.

CHAPTER 10

The Apostles as Instruments of Social Engagement: The Poetical Representation of the Apostles as a Means of Influencing Society

*Roald Dijkstra**

1 Introduction

Christian poetry flourished in the fourth century, especially in the Latin West. In the first half of the century, its most famous pieces, the epics of Juvencus and Proba, addressed the intellectual elite, but within fifty years, Christian poets developed poetical forms that could reach all strata of society.[1] Poetry started to assume an important place in the lives of ordinary Christians: it was used in liturgy (the hymns of Ambrose) and education (Gregory of Nazianzus) and it was read aloud to pilgrims in Nola (Paulinus). Poetry was also literally visible, since it obtained a prominent place in popular churches in the form of literary epigrams (Damasus) and captions that accompanied images (the *tituli* of Ambrose, Prudentius and Paulinus).[2] In early Christian culture, one of the

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1 Only few poems were written before Juvencus' and Proba's work. Commodianus wrote two works in the third century (but the date is disputed). The bizarre poems of Publilius Optatianus Porphyrius, the anonymous *Laudes Domini* and Lactantius' *De ave phoenice* are from the first decades of the fourth century, before Juvencus wrote his epic. In Greek, some fragments remain of Arius' theological hymns, probably written in classical metre.

2 It is this aspect of visibility which is particularly lacking in the article of M. Mastrangelo, "The Decline of Poetry in the Fourth-Century West," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 16: 3/4 (2009), 311–329 which emphasizes fourth century poetry's lack of status and dependence of ideas developed in prose, although it acknowledges (without further detail) the role of poetry in the life of ordinary people (see p. 315). Alan Cameron, "Poetry and Literary Culture in Late Antiquity," in S. Swain and M.J. Edwards, eds., *Approaching Late Antiquity: The Transformation from Early to Late Empire* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 327–354, argues for a much more positive evaluation of poetry's role and status in the fourth century.

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main justifications to write poetry was that it could teach the people about the Christian faith.[3]

The characters playing a role in this poetry were most often taken from the Bible. The apostles remain flat characters in the Bible, but they were nevertheless often referred to in poetical texts. They were seen as the primary witnesses of Christ's deeds and miracles on earth and therefore considered authoritative voices in Christian debates.[4]

In this paper I shall first discuss the significance of fourth century Christian poetry. Poetry was an appropriate means to spread a message among all Christians. Christian poets were well aware of this potential of poetry and tried to make use of it. This leads to the question what they wanted to communicate through their poems. I shall argue that they used their poems to promote two important ecclesiastical issues: the promotion of unity within the church and the promotion of the primacy of Peter.

2 Fourth-century Christian Poetry: A Ubiquitous Phenomenon

Almost all Christian poetry of the fourth century was written by poets who filled a position within the "catholic" church. Proba and Prudentius are the most notable exceptions.[5] The first poems were directed to an educated audience only. It is inconceivable that someone without profound education could understand what Juvencus was doing when he versified the gospels in a Virgilian way in his *Euangeliorum libri quattuor*. Proba's cento which summarizes the whole Bible in 694 Virgilian verses is sometimes hard to understand, even for someone who knows the Bible and Virgil. Both poets clearly tried to fit Christian poetry in the general climate of intellectual devotion to Virgil, which

3 However, Christian poets also hoped and believed that their poetry would serve their own salvation, as has been nicely demonstrated by T. Gärtner, "Die Musen im Dienste Christi: Strategien der Rechtfertigung christlicher Dichtung in der lateinischen Spätantike," *Vigiliae Christianae* 58 (2004), 424–436.

4 Although the composition of the Biblical canon was still discussed, general consensus existed about at least its narrative parts (the four gospels and Acts in which the apostles' deeds were described) in the fourth century, see e.g. W. Schneemelcher, "Zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons," in W. Schneemelcher, ed., *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen, Vol. 1: Evangelien*, 6th ed. (Tübingen, 1999), pp. 7–40.

5 Juvencus was a presbyter, according to Jerome (*De uiris illustribus* 84); Hilary, Ambrose, Damasus, Amphilochius, Gregory and (eventually, from around 410 onwards) Paulinus were bishops.

was particularly strong in the fourth century.[6] Their poems were probably read in literary circles or by people on their own. Another possibility is that they were recited publicly. Unfortunately, we do not have any testimony about the context of performance. In Proba's case, a more private use of her poem is suggested by its last verses (although the testimony by Jerome, see below, proves that the poem was certainly spread outside the familial sphere): in the penultimate verse of her poem (693), she addresses her husband (*o dulcis coniunx*) and summons him and her Christian brothers (*socii*, 692) not to postpone the celebration of Christian feasts. She also refers to her own offspring in 694: (…) *hunc ipse teneto / o dulcis coniunx, et si pietate meremur, / hac casti maneant in religione nepotes*.[7]

After Juvencus and Proba, especially Prudentius (e.g. his *Psychomachia*) wrote poems for an elite audience. Juvencus, Proba and Prudentius' poems (except for the latter's *Dittochaeon* and *Peristephanon*, see below) were probably only read in literary circles or by individuals. Although the poems were an inspiration for many other authors during the Middle Ages, contemporary reactions to their work are unfortunately lacking. The exception is Jerome's disapproval of Proba's cento, but her success proves that many people read her work with pleasure, probably as a game in recognizing literary allusions.[8] Paulinus must also be mentioned: in an elite context, he wrote both private letters (e.g. *Epist*. 8 to Licentius and *Epist*. 32 to Severus) and poems to be read aloud. Most of his *natalicia* were directed to a mixed audience (see below), but *c*. 27 (see esp. 360–595) and 28 (see esp. 1–59 and 167–325) were recited in the presence of the aristocrat Nicetas. Paulinus recited *c*. 21 at the visit of Melania the elder.[9]

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6 See e.g. J. den Boeft, "Nullius disciplinae expers: Virgil's Authority in (Late) Antiquity," in L.V. Rutgers et al., eds., *The Use of Sacred Books in the Ancient World* (Louvain, 1998), pp. 175–186.

7 692–694: "Keep this observance, o sweet husband, and if we should merit it through our piety, may our descendants remain pure in this religion." Translations of Proba's text are derived from E.A. Clark and D.F. Hatch, *The Golden Bough, the Oaken Cross: The Virgilian Cento of Faltonia Betitia Proba* (Chico, 1981).

8 For Jerome's negative judgment, see his *Epist*. 53.7, sent to the poet Paulinus of Nola: *puerilia sunt haec circulatorum ludo similia*. For Proba's popularity see R.P.H. Green, "Proba's Cento: Its Date, Purpose and Reception," *The Classical Quarterly* 45 (1995), 561–563. Her poem calls to mind the bizarre poetry of Porphyrius, published some decades earlier.

9 See W. Kirsch, *Die lateinische Versepik des 4. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1989), p. 209. K. Kohlwes, *Christliche Dichtung und stilistische Form bei Paulinus von Nola* (Bonn, 1979), pp. 213–215, supposes that at least *c*. 21 and 27 were recited only for a small audience, given their erudition and autobiographical content. He also doubts a mixed audience for *c*. 26.

Apart from these texts for an exclusively intellectual audience, much poetry combined traditional high-brow aesthetics with a clear message in order to reach a mixed audience of educated people of the elite and non educated people of lower social standing. It was evidently in the church's interest to attract both groups. Education and social standing were closely connected in Roman society. Only few people could read in the modern sense of the word.[10] However, many more people were semi-literate and had a working knowledge of scripture at least. Many founds, especially in Egypt, of administrative and juridical texts bear witness of this kind of literacy.[11] They were thus probably able to recognize and appreciate the value of texts, even if they were not able to read poems in Virgilian style, such as those of Juvencus. The people who were capable of doing that almost always belonged to the upper class. Aristocrats despised manual labour whereas (literary) education was regarded as a mark of nobility. Poets and prose writers were likely to support this view, since their education distinguished them from other people. A distinction between educated and uneducated people, in the social as well as in the cultural realm, must therefore be taken into account while analysing early Christian literature. Christianity in general has been analysed as a religion actively trying to seek contact with people of lower social standing. This has been called "democratization of culture".[12] It was a way to stand out to other religions and particularly to the ancient pagan religions. Poetry was part of that development. Most early Christian poets succeeded in reaching a mixed audience in roughly four ways: through public lecture, liturgy, depicted or engraved epigrams in churches and the use of poetry within an educational context.

We have only one example of an author who certainly read most of his poems aloud to a varied audience: Paulinus of Nola held lectures of a self-written poem (*natalicium*) in honour of Felix every year, from 395 onwards

10 See the classical study by W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), pp. 285–322.

11 This fact is emphasized in studies reacting to Harris' alleged pessimism regarding ancient literacy, see e.g. M. Corbier, "L'écriture en quête de lecteurs," and K. Hopkins, "Conquest by the book," in M. Beard, ed., *Literacy in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1991), pp. 99–118 and 133–158.

12 This term, minted by the historian Santo Mazzarino, has been taken up in 2001 in a special issue of *Antiquité Tardive*. See especially J.-M. Salamito, "Aspects aristocratiques et aspects populaires de l'être-chrétien aux IIIe et IVe siècles," *Antiquité Tardive* 9 (2001), 165–178, at pp. 168–171 about "descending democratisation," the promotion of aristocratic values among the people. Cf. J.-M. Carrié, "Introduction: Antiquité tardive et 'démocratisation de la culture': Un paradigme à géométrie variable," *L'Antiquité Tardive* 9 (2001), 27–46, at pp. 42–43 about the mixed audience envisaged by the Christian church.

to 408. Other poets wrote hymns meant to be sung during Mass: they reached a varied audience as well.[13] Epigrams which were used to decorate churches shared this aspect. Of course, only a small number of the churchgoers could read, but it is probable that texts on the walls of the churches nevertheless reached an audience beyond the literate part of the visitors. Many of these epigrams functioned as captions which accompanied images. Probably, priests and other clergy were informed about the content of these so-called *tituli*, even if they were not visible.[14] In sermons[15] as well as during "guided tours"[16] through the church, people were informed by the clergy about what was depicted and what was written beneath or above the images.[17] Collections of Damasus' epigrams proof, moreover, that people collected church epigrams and maybe brought them also to the church where they were depicted.[18] If the

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13 The hymns of Ambrose were certainly sung in church (cf. Augustine, *Confessiones* 9.15). Ambrose's hymns—with a metre close to the word stress and written in a plain language—seem to have been more accessible and therefore more suitable for liturgical use than the hymns written by Hilary and Prudentius, but it cannot be excluded that the hymns of these poets were sung in mass too. Prudentius' poetry did obtain a place in Mozarabic liturgy and possibly influenced the *breviarium romanum*, see P.-Y. Fux, *Les sept passions de Prudence* (*Peristephanon 2.5.9. 11–14*)*: Introduction générale et commentaire* (Freiburg, 2003), p. 101. See H.N. Parker, "Books and Reading Latin poetry," in W.A. Johnson and H.N. Parker, eds., *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 186–229, about Roman (classical) poets writing first and foremost with a transmission in books in mind, rather than writing in an oral literary culture.

14 There is much discussion about the *tituli*, about their function as well as the authenticity of the remaining verses. Very useful, also for an overview of the source material, is A. Arnulf, *Versus ad picturas: Studien zur Titulusdichtung als Quellengattung der Kunstgeschichte von der Antike bis zum Hochmittelalter* (München, 1997). Paulinus' *carmen* 27.542–595 (esp. 580–585) is the most important witness for the existence of *tituli* as verse captions. This passage has been extensively discussed, see especially G. Herbert de la Portbarré-Viard, *Descriptions monumentales et discours sur l'édification chez Paulin de Nole: Le regard et la lumière* (*epist. 32 et carm. 27 et 28*) (Leiden, 2006), pp. 331–355.

15 L. Pietri, *Pagina in pariete reserata: Epigraphie et architecture religieuse* (Faenza, 1988), p. 149, enumerating also other possible ways of knowledge of written texts by the illiterate.

16 I. Gualandri, *L'eredità tardo-antica* (Roma, 1992), p. 23. See also *Peristephanon* 9.17, referred to by A. Notermans, *Sprekende mozaïeken: Functie en betekenis van teksten op Romeinse vloermozaïeken* (Nijmegen, 2007), p. 252.

17 Paulinus' *carmen* 27,583–584 seems to indicate that the *tituli* were placed above the images: *fucata* (…) *umbra, quae super exprimitur titulis* (*umbra* in the context clearly indicates figural images), *pace* T. Lehmann, *Paulinus Nolanus und die Basilica Nova in Cimitile/Nola* (Wiesbaden, 2004), pp. 212–213.

18 A. Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana* (Roma, 1942), p. 14. Damasus' epigrams could certainly be read: they have even been called "monumental billboards". See M. Sághy,

tituli could actually be read, literate visitors might have informed others who could not read while reading aloud, purposefully or by habit.[19] Also someone who could not read a text exhibited in church, might have recognized the form of the hexameter and considered it a form worthy of a house of God.[20] The poetical form then added to the authority of the text. All authors of these texts undoubtedly were aware of the potential of publicly exhibited texts, which were abundant in ancient cities.

Outside the church, people were reached through education. The poetry, in Greek, by Gregory of Nazianzus and his nephew Amphilochius of Iconium is characterized by its overtly didactic purpose.[21] One of the clearest examples of Gregory's didactic concerns might be his poem 1.1.19: an enumeration of the names of the twelve apostles in hexameters.[22] This poem can only have functioned as a mnemonic tool for remembering the names of Christ's followers.

"*Scinditur in partes populus*. Pope Damasus and the Martyrs of Rome," *Early Medieval Europe* 9 (2000), 273–287, at p. 285.

19 See the overview of the evidence for this practice in antiquity in P.J. Achtemeier, "*Omne verbum sonat*: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109 (1990), 3–27.

20 Ibid., 156; Notermans, *Sprekende mozaïeken*, pp. 263–266; Pietri, *Pagina in pariete reserata*, p. 157: "Ce projet conçu clairement par Paulin de Nole et poursuivi par nombre d'auteurs de tituli était sans doute trop ambitieux pour être pleinement compris de l'ensemble des fidèles. Cependant les textes gravés, même lorsqu'ils demeuraient obscurs ou indéchiffrables, étaient certainement perçus par les plus humbles comme sacrés et contribuaient ainsi à sacraliser le monument." T. Lehmann, "Eine spätantike Inschriftensammlung und der Besuch des Papstes Damasus an der Pilgerstätte des Hl. Felix in Cimitile/Nola," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 91 (1992), 243–281, at pp. 254–256 convincingly argues for an original presentation of the *titulus* mentioned in Paulinus' *Epist*. 32.10 in two rows of seven verses: the hexametrical form was clearly visible.

21 Although Gregory and Amphilochius of Iconium wrote in Greek—which was presumably not mastered by the poets from the West (or only in a rudimentary way)—, their treatment of the apostles appears very much the same as in Latin poetry. Alan Cameron, "Poetry and Literary Culture," 327–354, here pp. 333–336, emphasizes Gregory's and Amphilochius' position within a broad classical tradition of Latin and Greek poetry (ibid. for their didacticism).

22 All poetry by Gregory referred to in this paper can be found in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 37. Numbers of Gregory's poems refer to the so-called *carmina dogmatica* (1.1.1–1.1.38), *carmina moralia* (1.2.1–1.2.40), *carmina de se ipso* (2.1.1–2.1.99) and the *carmina quae spectant ad alios* (2.2.1–2.2.7).

3 Two Kinds of *Concordia*

The Christian poets of the fourth century were of course influenced by the circumstances of the time and the position of the church, since they were almost all member of the clergy. The fourth century can be called a formative period for the Christian church. What this church actually was and should be was heavily discussed. Of course, there were ideas about a catholic church well before the fourth century.[23] The council of Nicea laid down a more authoritative and legitimatized description of its orthodoxy and became the common ground for all churches belonging to a universal Christian church. However, it did not convince every Christian in the empire of its righteous orthodoxy. Heresies and disputes about theological matters were abundant. Unity therefore was an important concept to propagate for members of the Nicene 'catholic' church.[24] This preoccupation with unity also influenced Christian poetry: Christian poets tried to promote unity through the representation of the twelve apostles. These men, being the first followers and witnesses of Christ, presented the unity which the church tried to imitate. At the same time, some individual characters were needed to enliven the story of the united group of the twelve. These individuals were found in the figures of Peter and Paul, who in any case were too important to be ignored: Peter as the apostle of the Jews and Paul as the apostle of the gentiles. However, lest the idea would arise that they represented two different factions within Christianity, the unity between these two apostles was also emphasized. Unity is therefore represented in two ways within apostolic representation: the *concordia duodecim* exists alongside the *concordia apostolorum* (*Petri et Pauli*).

4 Concordia Duodecim

Juvencus and Proba versified (parts of) the gospels. Consequently, Paul and the *concordia apostolorum* had no place in their work. An attentive reading of the poems shows, however, that the *concordia duodecim* is clearly present. The gospels already focus on the twelve as a group and pay less attention to the apostles as individuals. Since Juvencus and Proba wrote a versification of

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23 See e.g. Cyprian's *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* which discusses the unity within the church and the primary position of the church of Rome.

24 Cf. P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981), pp. 93–97 about the "late-Roman preoccupation with concord" (p. 96) and its connection to the cult of the saints.

the Biblical text, this aspect logically also appears in their poems. However, in some instances these authors go beyond the Biblical example to stress the apostolic unity. A significant example of this procedure can be seen in Juvencus' *Euangelia* 3.590–2.[25] In this passage, Matt. 20:20–4 is versified. The Biblical text runs as follows:

> 20 Tunc accessit ad eum mater filiorum Zebedei cum filiis suis adorans et petens aliquid ab eo. 21 Ipse autem dixit ei: Quid vis? Ait et illa: Dic, ut sedeant hi duo fili mei unus ad dexteram tuam et unus ad sinistram in regno tuo. 22 Respondens autem Iesus dixit illis: Nescitis, quid petatis; potestis bibere calicem, quem ego bibiturus sum? Dicunt ei: Possumus. 23 Ait illis Iesus: Calicem quidem meum bibetis, sedere autem ad dexteram meam vel ad sinistram non est meum dare uobis, sed quibus paratum est a patre meo. 24 Et audientes decem contristati sunt de duobus fratribus.[26]

The opening sentence reveals small differences between the Biblical text and Juvencus' versification: the Biblical *Tunc accessit ad eum mater filiorum Zebedei cum filiis suis adorans et petens aliquid ab eo* becomes *Hic tum Zebedei coniux submissa rogabat* (*Euangelia* 3.590): 'Then the wife of Zebedee modestly asked…' The references to the two apostles (*filiorum* and *cum filiis suis*) are omitted. The addition of *submissa* shows the question itself more modest than in the Biblical text. Juvencus then follows the Bible in his versification of Matt. 20:21–3, but leaves out the references to James and John again in Matt. 20:22–3: in both cases *illis* is omitted. Matt. 20:24 is completely reworked. The verse reveals some discord among the disciples, indicated as the ten, as opposed to James and John ('the two'). Juvencus tries to exonerate these two disciples from the accusation of haughtiness.: the clear expression of the apostles' grief (*Et audientes decem contristati sunt de duobus fratribus*) is attenuated by a shift

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25 Cf. *Euangelia* 3.126 and Id. 4.508.

26 The Biblical text is the Vetus Latina cited from A. Jülicher, *Itala: Das Neue Testament in altlateinischer Überlieferung / nach den Handschriften hrsg. von Adolf Jülicher; zum Druck besorgt von Walter Matzkow* (Berlin, 1963). It is not sure which Bible version was used by Juvencus, and even the extensive analysis by C. Heinsdorff, *Christus, Nikodemus und die Samaritanerin bei Juvencus: Mit einem Anhang zur lateinischen Evangelienvorlage* (Berlin, 2003) did not clarify this (see pp. 339–480, "Zur lateinischen Evangelienvorlage des Juvencus"). Juvencus' slight but significant alterations vis-à-vis the Biblical text do suggest that he used a written version, although he undoubtedly knew large parts of the Bible by heart. Juvencus' text is taken from J. Huemer, *Gai Vetti Aquilini Juvenci Evangeliorum libri quattuor* (CSEL) 24 (Wien, 1891), which is still the most recent edition. Translations are my own, unless stated otherwise.

of attention from the grief of the apostles to the smoothness of Jesus' reaction (*Euangelia* 3.600–1): *Exin discipulos dictis pro talibus omnes / conmotos tali sermonis mulcet honore* ("After that, he soothes the disciples who are all upset through these words with the beauty of his discourse"). This distracts the attention from the discord among the disciples.

Another example of Juvencus' focus on the twelve apostles as a group is the way he versifies their election. The synoptic gospels provide a list of the names of all the apostles (e.g. Matt. 10:2–4). Juvencus normally follows Matthew's gospel, but sometimes chooses to versify another one. In the versification of the list, however, he confines himself to two verses (*Euangelia* 2.430–1): *Haec fatus populo ex omni delecta seorsum / fortia conglomerat bisseno pectora coetu* 'After he had said this, he gathered in a group twelve strong hearts, elected out of all the people.' The names of the twelve did not interest Juvencus, since he wanted to underline the unity among them.[27] Gregory's poem 1.1.19 proves, albeit in Greek, that it was possible to put the twelve names in hexameters. Whereas Juvencus does describe the vocations of some individual apostles, since they are described in the gospels, Proba leaves them out entirely.[28] Of course her poem was considerably shorter than Juvencus' text, but the omission nevertheless testifies to her lack of interest in the individual apostles.[29] Although it was more difficult for her to point to individuals, since she could only use

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27 According to J.-M. Poinsotte, *Juvencus et Israël: La représentation des juifs dans le premier poème latin chrétien* (Paris, 1979), e.g. pp. 30–32, Juvencus shows a tendency to omit Jewish names in order to avoid alienation of his audience, but Poinsotte seems too firm in accusing Juvencus of anti-Semitism. The avoidance has more to do with Juvencus' versification technique, see e.g. P. Santorelli, *I libri dei vangeli II* (Pisa, 2005), p. 112, and R.P.H. Green, *Latin Epics of the New Testament: Juvencus, Sedulius, Arator* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 103–112.

28 R. Herzog, *Die Bibelepik der lateinischen Spätantike: Formgeschichte einer erbaulichen Gattung* (München, 1975), p. 35, argues that the vocation is described in 458, but the context of this verse (456–462) rather describes Jesus' tour through the country and the gleeful reaction of the people. M. Bažil, *Centones Christiani: Métamorphoses d'une forme intertextuelle dans la poésie latine chrétienne de l'Antiquité tardive* (Turnhout, 2009), p. 171, suggests that verse 534 could refer to the vocation of the apostles.

29 A more direct example of Proba's emphasis on the unity among the twelve apostles is found in verse 667 of her cento. The context assures that Jesus (using Aeneas' words from *Aeneid* 1.94) addresses his disciples (Aeneas' comrades in *Aeneid* 1.94) after his resurrection, with the words *o terque quaterque beati*. However, he actually addresses eleven apostles, since Judas hung himself after his betrayal and Matthias was not yet chosen to succeed him. W.A. Bienert, *Das Apostelbild in der altchristlichen Überlieferung* (Tübingen, 1997), p. 17, points to the same phenomenon in the apocryphal *Euangelium Petri* 14.59 and *Ascensio Isaiae* 3.17. The word 'twelve' is also a *terminus technicus* in 1 Cor. 15:5.

Virgilian words, it will be shown further on that she did succeed in referring to Peter and Judas.[30]

An example of the emphasis on apostolic unity in the second half of the century (in which period this emphasis is less evident, see below) is Paulinus' *carmen* 27.95–106 about Whitsun. In the verses preceding the passage, Paulinus invokes the new day and enumerates all the feast days which God had given to humankind (vv. 43–134), including the feast day of Felix (*carmen* 27 is a *natalicium*), in the cycle of Christian holy days. Much attention is paid to Whitsun (vv. 60–106), which as a separate feast day was only recently added to the Christian liturgical calendar.[31] The concept of unity in disparity plays an important role in this passage: Whitsun celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit resulting in people speaking all kind of different languages, but the one God assured that only one message was spread. Paulinus emphasizes this several times in the passage.[32] Following this line of thought, his qualification of the twelve apostles as a *pubis apostolicae concors … coetus* is appropriate. The *concordia* among the apostles is emphasized and contrasted to the different languages (101: *diuiduis … linguis*) and various tongues (102: *uarias … uoces*) which are heard.

Whereas the unity among most of the apostles is easily defended using the Bible, the position of Judas is of course problematic. His role does not fit with the image of the apostles as a coherent group of faithful followers of Christ. In Juvencus there is a certain tendency to present him more favourable than one would expect. In general, the poet is known for his dramatization and psychologizing of the Biblical account.[33] But Juvencus is lenient in his view on Judas, although the character of Judas offers great opportunities to employ his technique. It is true that he calls him *amens* (*Euangelia* 4.422) and *furens* (Id. 4.514), but he also adds vis-à-vis the Biblical text that Judas was *grauiter tum corda conscia pectora pressus* 'heavily dejected in his conscious heart' after Jesus had announced at the Last Supper that one of the apostles would betray him.[34] Proba is even more ambiguous in this respect: in 593–5 she versifies the

30 On Proba's literary technique in general see e.g. Bažil, *Centones*, pp. 187–197.

31 See *LTR* 8 s.v. 'Pfingsten II'.

32 See especially vv. 64–65 *Vnus et ipse deus diuersa per ora cucurrit |omnigenasque uno sonuit tunc ore loquellas*; 70–71 (…) *sed in omnibus unum | uoce deum uaria laudabat spiritus unus*; and the two comparisons in verses 72–80.

33 See e.g. Green, *Latin Epics*, p. 42.

34 *Euangelia* 4.443. For a characterization of Judas in Juvencus, see also K. Thraede, "Iuvencus," in T. Klauser, ed., *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, vol. 19 (Stuttgart, 2001), pp. 881–906, at pp. 903–904.

words of Christ who at the Last Supper announces that someone will betray him.[35] She does so, however, with the words *unus erit tantum*, which in the *Aeneid* (5.814) refer to Palinurus, the helmsman of Aeneas who is about to die lest the other persons on board be spared by Poseidon.[36] It is significant that Aeneas is regularly equated to Christ by Proba. Moreover, Judas is presented as a mediator for peace (*paci medium se offert*) with the Virgilian wording designating Galaesus, an enemy, but a righteous one, of Aeneas in *Aeneid* 7.535–9.[37] Proba cannot be said to present a straightforward negative opinion about Judas.[38] Juvencus and Proba seem, again, to be preoccupied foremost with the unity of the twelve and providing positive associations with them. They could of course not deny the fact that one of the apostles betrayed Jesus, but they tried to make the best out of it.

Gregory explicitly addresses the problem of Judas being one of the twelve (poem 1.2.1 verses 680–3):

> Ἄγγελος ἦν τοπάροιθεν Ἑωσφόρος. Ἀλλὰ πέσοντος,
> οὐρανίοις παρέμιμνεν ἑὸν κλέος, ὡς δὲ μαθηταῖς
> οὐδεν Ἰούδας ὄνειδος, ἐπεὶ πέσεν, ἀλλ᾽ ὁ μὲν ὦκα
> ἐξ ἀριθμοῦ λογάδων, οἱ δ᾽ ἕνδεκα μίμνον ἄριστοι.
>
> Lucifer formerly was an angel. But, when he fell, his glory remained among the heavenly ones, just as Judas was no reproach to the disciples, when he fell, but he straightway was struck from the number of the elect, while the eleven best disciples remained.[39]

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35 *Et lux cum primum terris se crastina reddet, / unus erit tantum in me exitiumque meorum, / dum paci medium se offert de corpore nostro*: 'And as soon as light gives itself back to earth tomorrow, there will be just one so much in for the ruin of my and my people, while he presents himself as a peace mediator regarding our body.'

36 For the significance Palinurus had for Proba, cf. ibid., pp. 134–135. There are two versions of Palinurus' death in the *Aeneid* (5.835–860 and 6.337–361). Proba's choice for Palinurus as a 'typological' character for Judas might reflect her ambiguous feelings about Judas' death.

37 Galaesus might have been deemed more apt to prefigure Judas since he was rich, which could be an ironical reference to the thirty silver pieces Judas got for his betrayal. I owe this insight to drs. Jörn Soerink, University of Groningen.

38 Verse 593 opening the passage is *Aeneid* 8.170, which also appears in a positive context, i.e. Euander discussing the treaty between him and Aeneas.

39 Trans. P. Gilbert, *On God and Man: The Theological Poetry of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus* (Crestwood, 2001), p. 116.

Verse 683 offers a rare example of the use of the number eleven to denote the apostles, which in poetry occurs only here (but cf. note 29 above). The didactic character of Gregory's poetry might have contributed to his desire to clearly present Judas as the betrayer of Christ and as a bad man, but apparently he wanted to be sure that the situation was not misunderstood and that the apostles were not associated with betrayal and apostasy.[40]

In sharp contrast with Gregory is the work of Prudentius, who wrote approximately around the same time. His *Psychomachia* is a work which does not seem to be suited for catechumens but rather seems to have been written for more profoundly grounded Christians. In this work describing a battle between vices and virtues Judas is praised in a speech of the vice *Avaritia*. She notes with amazement that her spear does not strike some priests on the battlefield, due to the intervention of *Ratio. Avaritia* complains that the Christians are not liable to bribery. She then sums up some of her successes in the past, the first of which is Judas. He is praised as *magnus discipulorum*:

> Nonne triumphum
> egimus ex Scarioth, magnus qui discipulorum
> et conuiua Dei, dum fallit foedere mensae
> haudquaquam ignarum, dextramque parabside iungit.
>
> Did we not triumph over Iscariot, a great one among the disciples and a commensal of God, while he betrayed Him (though He knows all) as he sat at his table and put his hand into the dish? (Psychomachia 529–532)[41]

Prudentius was a much more daring poet than Gregory, but it is the educated audience he aimed at with his *Psychomachia* which explains his freer use of the Biblical material here. The allegorical nature of the *Psychomachia* and its highly stylized form suggest that the poem was directed to the higher

40 In Gregory's poetry the apostles are contrasted to Judas several times, see 1.2.1, verses 680–683; 1.2.3, verse 48; 1.2.6, verse 23; 1.2.15, verse 107. Cf. Hilary of Poitiers: *Duodecim uiros probauit per quos uita discitur. / Ex quis unus inuenitur, Christi Iudas traditor*, ed. A. Feder, CSEL (Wien, 1966), pp. 217–223: "He (sc. Jesus) approved twelve men, through whom life is learnt. But there is one among them, who is Judas, the betrayer of Christ." *Hymnum dicat turba fratrum* 30–31. The verb *probauit* emphasizes that it happened under God's supervision.

41 Text: M. Lavarenne, *Prudence*, vol. 3: *Psychomachie, Contre Symmaque. Texte établi et traduit par Maurice Lavarenne. Deuxième tirage de l'édition revue, corrigée et augmentée par Jean-Louis Charlet* (Paris, 2002). Trans. H.J. Thompson, *Prudentius*, vol. 1 (London, 1962).

clergy in particular: people with a good education and a serious interest in theological matters.

Ambrose, Damasus and Paulinus do not mention Judas at all. In their poetry primarily meant to honour the saints and to promote the martyrs' cult was no place for the negative figure of Judas: they focused on the triumphant advance of Christianity rather than its complex beginning.

5 Concordia Apostolorum

The lack of interest in the individual apostles and the emphasis on the group of twelve disciples in the oeuvre of Juvencus and Proba contrasts with the works of poets writing after them. In the second half of the fourth century, two of the most fervent supports and promoters of the martyrs' cult come to the fore: Ambrose, bishop of Milan, and Damasus, bishop of Rome. They never mention the twelve apostles as a group in their poetry, but they do pay attention to the individual apostles. Especially the hymn devoted to John by Ambrose (hymn 6: *Amore Christi nobilis*) is remarkable, since it is the only separate piece of poetry devoted to an apostle other than Peter or Paul, until the year 400. Juvencus and Proba had versified many Biblical stories about the apostles as a group. They apparently versified all the stories which were of potential interest to the poets, since only one new story about the twelve is found in the poetry of the second half of the fourth century (Whitsun mentioned by Paulinus in *Carmen* 27, see p. 189 above).

The main interest with regards to the apostles changes from the *concordia duodecim* to the *concordia apostolorum* of Peter and Paul in this period.[42] This *concordia* is the only aspect of the apostles' representation in early Christian poetry which has received considerable attention in modern scholarship.[43] Indeed, it is an important topic. Possible critique on the relationship between Peter and Paul was to be avoided. A generally neglected poem which treats this

42 This is not to say that the *concordia duodecim* did not have a place anymore in poetry. See note 40 about Hilary.

43 About the *concordia apostolorum* in general see e.g. F. Gahbauer, *Petrus und Paulus in Rom: Sprachlich und ekklesiologisch bedingte Tendenzen zugunsten des Petrus oder Paulus in den Texten (2.–4. Jh.)?* (Roma, 2001); C. Pietri, *Roma Christiana: Recherches sur l'Eglise de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie de Miltiade à Sixte III (311–440)* (Roma, 1976), pp. 1590–1596; and J.M. Huskinson, *Concordia Apostolorum: Christian Propaganda at Rome in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries: A study in Early Christian Iconography and Iconology* (Oxford, 1982).

topic is one of the so-called *Carmina moralia* written by Gregory of Nazianzus: 1.2.25, 'About anger'. The poem briefly discusses the conflict between Peter and Paul in Antioch mentioned in Gal. 2:11–4. The rather harsh reproach of Paul to Peter, whom he accuses of hypocrisy (Gal 2:13), is changed into a situation in which the great qualities of both apostles are praised (1.2.25, 222–224): Πέτρου δὲ δῆτα τοῦ σοφοῦ τεθαύμακα, / ὡς μακροθύμως καὶ λίαν νεανικῶς / ἤνεγκε Παύλου τὴν καλὴν παῤῥησίαν ('I really admire how sage Peter patiently and very generously tolerated the beautiful frankness of Paul'). There was a long exegetical tradition on this passage, which was sometimes used by heretical groups to defend their preference for either Peter or Paul as the most important apostle. Gregory's interpretation is similar to that which is best known through Jerome, but derived from a tradition in which Origen plays an important role.[44] According to this exegesis of the Biblical passage, Peter and Paul had simulated a dispute in order to keep Jewish and non Jewish Christians to the Christian faith. According to Gregory's verse 228 Peter's intention was to act "fruitful for the Word". In this way, the gravity of the situation is mitigated and the *concordia apostolorum* defended. This fits in with Gregory's attempt to explain why the apostles were not contaminated by Judas, as discussed above. In both cases, Gregory tries to answer (possible) negative readings of a Biblical passage through a poem.

Poetically more interesting are the two prefaces, one to each book, of the *Contra Symmachum* which Prudentius devoted to Peter and Paul. Prudentius compares Paul who was attacked by a viper (Acts 27:14–28:6) to the church attacked by Symmachus in the first preface. In the second one, he compares himself to Peter (who is called *summus discipulus*, 2 *C.Symm.praef.* 2):[45] like this apostle when he tried to walk on the waves (Matt. 14:22–33), Prudentius

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44 G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes, *De controverse tussen Petrus en Paulus: Galaten 2:11 in de historie* (The Hague, 1967), pp. 5–11. Cf. M.J. Edwards, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament VIII: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians* (Downers Grove, 1998), pp. 25–29; and G. Rinaldi, *Pietro apostolo ed i vescovi Romani nel giudizio dei pagani* (Roma, 2001), pp. 300–302. C. Moreschini, I. Costa, C. Crimi and G. Laudizi, *Gregorio Nazianzeno: Poesie*, vol. 1 (Roma, 1994), p. 204 seem not to be aware of the exegetical tradition of this passage: "Si ha, qui, un'imprecisione." Cf. Migne, PG 37 (note to 227): "Videtur hic Gregorius a Scripturae in mente discedere." Other passages where the Antiochean conflict is mentioned by Gregory—shortly and without displaying the controversy—are e.g. *Contra Arianos et de seipso*, 11c (PG 36) and *Funebris oratio in patrem* xxiv b (PG 35).

45 R. Klein, "*Paulus praeco Dei—Petrus summus discipulus*: Die Bedeutung der beiden Apostel für Prudentius (*praefatio* 1 und 2 *contra Symmachum*)," in P. Grech et al., eds., *Pietro e Paolo: Il loro rapporto con Roma nelle testimonianze antiche. XXIX Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità Cristiana* (Roma, 2001), pp. 335–350, at p. 345 interprets this as a reference

needs Jesus' extending hand in his combat with his adversary Symmachus. Both prefaces are structured in the same way: an introduction about the apostle (1 *C.Symm.praef.* 1–6 and 2 *C.Symm.praef.* 1–2, both with the name of the apostle as the first word of the poem), the versification of a Biblical story (1 *C.Symm.praef.* 7–44 and 2 *C.Symm.praef.* 3–43) and the connection of this story with Prudentius' own time (1 *C.Symm.praef.* 45–79 and 2 *C.Symm.praef.* 44–66). Peter and Paul were chosen as subjects of these prefaces since they were the two outstanding heroes of the Christian faith.

Whereas in the first half of the fourth century Juvencus and Proba restricted themselves to the past—combining the Christian, Biblical past with the mythical past of Roman literature—Prudentius directly refers to contemporary politics in which the Christian faith plays an important role. Moreover, he compares himself to an apostle. The influence of classical literature remains: Juvencus and Proba equalled Christ to Aeneas and the apostles to his companions, Prudentius links Paul to Aeneas in the preface to 1 *Contra Symmachum*.[46] In this last poem, the story about Paul is also used to attack heretics who try to divide the church.[47] Again, an apostle is used to promote unity.

The actualization of the Christian past was not only apparent in literature like that of Prudentius, but also in the power of martyrs' relics which represented the past but worked in the present time too.[48] The relics of Peter and Paul had a special significance, because of their outstanding position within the church. The two main churches devoted to them are described in Prudentius' *Peristephanon* 12.

Some time before Prudentius, Damasus had already emphasized Peter and Paul's former presence in the *Basilica apostolorum ad catacumbas* (i.e. in the modern *San Sebastiano*) in his *Epigram* 20.[49] The two apostles were explicitly

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to the primacy of the Roman bishop, but one would rather expect Prudentius to use the word *primus* than, which he uses for Paul in 1 *C.Symm.praef.* 2.

46 See G. Partoens, "Acts 27–28 in the Preface to Prudentius's first *Liber contra Symmachum*," *Vigiliae Christianae* 57 (2003), 36–61, at pp. 43–44.

47 See Partoens, "Acts 27–28," pp. 51–53.

48 Cf. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, pp. 86–105, pp. 81–82 about actualization in the acts of martyrs. Cf. also Paulinus' account of Martinianus who was saved from shipwreck without being able to tell how, but found himself at the shore with an edition of Paul's letters at his chest, *Carmen* 24.263–98, ed. G. De Hartel, *Paulinus Nolanus: Carmina, indices et addenda edidit Guilelmus de Hartel. Editio altera supplementis aucta curante Margit Kamptner*, CSEL 30 (Wien, 1999), trans. P.G. Walsh, *The Poems of St. Paulinus of Nola* (New York, 1975).

49 In translation the poem reads: 'You must realise that once the saints dwelt here, you, whoever you are, who asks for the names of Peter and Paul alike. The East sent these disciples, something we deliberately admit, and—having followed Christ beyond the stars because

linked to the city of Rome which, according to the poem, deserved it more than others (*sic, Roma suos potius meruit defendere ciues, Epigram* 20.6) to claim them as their citizens.[50] Since Damasus attached his epigrams to the wall above martyrs' graves, the message was uttered towards every visitor of the church where the tomb of the martyr was located.[51] This epigram reflects a special case, however, since Damasus emphasizes the apostles' *former* presence (*Hic habitasse prius sanctos*, epigram 20.1).[52] This is an indication of the popularity of Peter and Paul in Rome: despite the existence of the churches of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, the *Basilica apostolorum*, which had a minor place in the history of the relics of the apostles, attracted many pilgrims. This led Damasus to exhibit an epigram in their honour. Epigram 20 is the first poem in which Peter and Paul are mentioned together, but it immediately touches upon all the important aspects of their personalities: they were viewed as a pair, apt to represent the whole church, claimed by Rome although they came from the East (*Discipulos Oriens misit, quod sponte fatemur*, epigram 20.3) and their martyrdom was the aspect of their lives which was most prominently brought into the limelight (*sanguinis ob meritum Christumque per astra secuti / aetherios petiere sinus regnaque piorum*, epigram 20.4–5).[53] In the concluding verse (*Haec Damasus vestras referat noua sidera laudes*, epigram 20.7), Damasus not only mentions his own name—a common feature of his work—but also

of the merit of their blood—they have reached the celestial heartlands and the realms of the pious: Rome has deserved more (sc.: than other cities) to claim them as its own citizens. These things Damasus wants to mention, new stars, as your praise.'

50 Huskinson, *Concordia Apostolorum*, p. 89: "However, it is the placing by Damasus of an inscription proclaiming the *nova sidera* in the *basilica apostolorum* that must be seen as the unmistakable act of propaganda which underlined the *concordia apostolorum*."

51 This is clearly expressed in his epigram 20, verses 1–2: *Hic habitasse prius sanctos cognoscere debes / nomina quisque Petri pariter Paulique requiris. Quisque* shows Damasus' concern to reach as many different people as possible. Cf. Sághy, "Pope Damasus and the Martyrs of Rome," p. 277: "Damasus should rather be seen as the inventor of Christian public poetry."

52 According to Fux, *Les sept passions de Prudence*, p. 58, Damasus exhibited his epigram in the Basilica *apostolorum* precisely to stress Peter and Paul's former presence. He tried to put an end to the *refrigeria* in the basilica—associated with pagan ritual—and tried to transfer the cult for Peter and Paul exclusively to the Saint Peter and the Saint Paul. However, it seems strange to assume that Damasus tried to do this by emphazising the place of the church in the apostle relics' history. Thanks to the epigram, the knowledge about Peter and Paul's presence in the basilica became spread over Europe. Moreover, the new places of reverence are not indicated in the epigram.

53 Cf. Sághy, "Pope Damasus and the Martyrs of Rome,," pp. 277–279 about more personal reasons for Damasus to promote unity.

refers to the position of Peter and Paul as the new defenders of Rome, replacing the *Dioscuri* (the constellation *Gemini*), the traditional pagan defenders of the city.[54]

6 Peter as a Source of Episcopal Legitimatization in Christian Poetry

This emphasis on the apostles' bond with Rome points to another main characteristic of early Christian poetry regarding the apostles' representation: the exaltation of Peter and his connection to the bishopric of Rome. Churchmen who strived at one united church, in most cases accepted that Rome was worth more than other cities due to the martyrdom of especially Peter.[55]

Damasus, as a bishop of Rome, actively started to propagate Peter's special position and his connection to the Roman bishop. In his small poetic oeuvre, he once explicitly refers to Peter in an epigram written to decorate the Vatican baptistery. This is of course a most significant place: here, the catechumen who was about to become a Christian read this text which emphasized the legitimatization of the position of the Roman bishop just before he received baptism. The poem is only partially extant, but offers a telling example of the role attributed to Peter: *sed prestante Petro cui tradita ianua caeli est, / antistes Christi conposuit Damasus. / Una Petri sedes, unum uerumque lauacrum*[56]

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54 S. Diefenbach, *Römische Erinnerungsräume: Heiligenmemoria und kollektive Identitäten im Rom des 3. bis 5. Jahrhunderts n. Chr.* (Berlin, 2007), pp. 308–309; Huskinson, *Concordia Apostolorum*, p. 110. Damasus also established 29 June as a feast day for Peter and Paul, see R. Klein, *Paulus praeco Dei: Petrus summus discipulus Dei*, p. 337. On this day, one traditionally commemorated the apotheosis of Romulus, one of the founders of Rome. Although it has been doubted if this feast was still in use in Damasus' time (O. Zwierlein, *Petrus in Rom: Die literarische Zeugnisse: Mit einer kritischen Edition der Martyrien des Petrus und Paulus auf neuer handschriftlicher Grundlage*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 2010), p. 170, note 104), it was probably still known.

55 Cyprian's *De unitate* is pervaded with this idea, see esp. sections 4–5 of this text. For a discussion about these paragraphs and an evaluation of the argument see M. Poirier, P. Mattei and P. Siniscalco, *Cyprien de Carthage: L'Unité de l'église* (Sources chrétiennes) 500 (Paris, 2006), esp. pp. 65–115. Cyprian's text is a telling example of the idea that the apostles were a unity, but Peter nevertheless had an outstanding position (being the source of that very unity, see *De Unitate* 4, "Primacy text").

56 4. *In baptisterio Vaticano*, verses 2–4. The text is taken from the edition by A. Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana* (Rome, 1942). Ferrua's texts are enriched with translation and commentary in U. Reutter, *Damasus, Bischof von Rom (366–384): Leben und Werk* (Tübingen, 2009). The first line consists of a literal quotation of Vergil *Aeneid* 12.427, where the physician Iapix speaks to Aeneas. Unfortunately, the number of verses in the

'but with the support of Peter, to whom the gate of heaven has been trusted over, the bishop of Christ, Damasus, has composed it. There is only one seat of Peter and there is only one true baptism (...).' The idea that the keys of heaven are entrusted to Peter is taken from the famous passage in Matt. 16:19, immediately after the even more often cited (see below) Biblical verse in which Jesus declares Peter the rock on which the church will be built.[57] What is most important in Damasus' poem, however, is of course the direct link between Peter and Damasus. The bishop holds the only (sic) seat of Peter (*una Petri sedes*).[58] There can be no misunderstanding of this part of the poem's message, nor about the emphasis on unity, which had a special concern for Damasus since his election as a bishop at the expense of his rival Ursinus was a sanguinary one.[59]

Obviously, Damasus had a strong self-interest in connecting his bishop's seat with Peter, who provided it with legitimacy and authority, and ever since this bishop-pope, Roman bishops actively propagated their bond with Peter. Other poets supported this, even if they had no direct connection with Rome.[60]

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gap between this verse and the following is unknown. Aeneas is often equated to Christ in Christian literature. Given the context of the lines cited below, this idea might have played a role in this poem too, whether in an attempt to enforce the association of Peter with Christ or not. After 4, only *uincula nulla tenent* remains. M. Ihm, *Damasi epigrammata: Accedunt pseudodamasiana aliaque ad Damasiana inlustranda idonea* (Leipzig, 1895) and Huskinson, *Concordia Apostolorum*, p. 35, doubt the authenticity of this epigram.

57 Another poetical reference to Matt. 16:19 can be found in the obscure *Oratio consulis Ausonii versibus rhopalicis*, dated around 400: *dans claues superas cathedrali incohatori* "(Jesus) giving the supreme keys to the episcopal founder". The poem is attributed to Ausonius, but its authenticity is doubted, see R.P.H. Green, *The Works of Ausonius: Edited with Introduction and Commentary by R.P.H. Green* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 667–669, for a short discussion and the text of the poem. The context of the poem is not clear: it might have been used as instruction of catechumens, see J. Martin, "Textes chrétiens d'Ausone," *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé* 31 (1972), 503–512, at p. 511): "(...) elle constitue un petit cours complet d'instruction religieuse, exposant en quarante-deux vers l'essentiel de la foi chrétienne (...)." The author is "un prêtre, peut-on avancer avec une quasi-certitude" (ibid).

58 Cf. *epigram* 35^1.4: *antistes sedis <apostolicae>* from the basilica of Hyppolitus.

59 See Reutter, *Damasus*, pp. 31–56.

60 The link between the bishop's see and the apostle Peter is also made explicit by Prudentius, in *Peristephanon* 2.461–464 and 11.31–32. Other poets refer to it in a less explicit but equally clear way, alluding to Matt. 16:18 and to the wordplay on Peter's name. This is the case with Paulinus, in *Epist.* 32.10, verses 12–14, and Ambrosius in hymn 1.15: *hoc ipse petra ecclesiae*. Gregory of Nazianzus testifies to the presence of the same ideas in the Eastern part of the empire, in 1.2.1, verses 487–488 and 1.2.12, verses 222–224. In 222, Peter is called μαθητῶν

I will discuss a passage in Juvencus more explicitly, since his poem is often neglected in modern literature, especially in studies which are not exclusively discussing early Christian poetry.

In Juvencus' epic Peter is the only apostle whom the poet describes using positive adjectives—even the collective group of the twelve apostles of which the unity is emphasized must do without. Normally this is part of Juvencus' versification technique.[61] Peter is called *praesolidus* (*Euangelia* 1.422), *stabilis* (3.271) *fortis* (3.273), and *fortissime* (4.473). Even more telling is the description in *Euangelia* 3.534: *Tum Petrus fidei munitus moenibus infit* 'Then Peter said, strengthened by the walls of faith.' The bible merely reads: *Tunc respondens Petrus dixit ei* (Matt. 19:27). Juvencus' wording immediately calls Matt. 16:18 to mind.[62] Matt. 16:16–9 is versified in *Euangelia* 3.271–87, thus including the positive adjectives *stabilis* and *fortis* mentioned above. Although the whole passage includes additions vis-à-vis the Bible which exalt Peter, the most significant part is *Euangelia* 3.276–80:[63]

> Genitoris munera sola
> possunt tam validum fidei concedere robur.[64]
> Tu nomen Petri digna virtute tueris.
> Hac in mole mihi saxique in robore ponam
> semper mansuras aeternis moenibus aedes.

> The gifts of the Creator alone can grant such a powerful strength of faith. You are bearing the name Peter deservedly through your virtue. On this rock and on the strength of this boulder I will build my ever standing house with its eternal walls.

ἄκρος, 'the highest of the apostles'. Cf. the praise for Peter by John Chrysostom, with the idea about Andrew as a founder of the episcopal see in Constantinople not yet or only marginally developed, discussed by F. Dvornik, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), pp. 140–141.

61 Green, *Latin Epics*, p. 42.

62 M. Bauer, *Philologischer Kommentar zum dritten Buch der Evangeliorum Libri des Juvencus* (Wien, 1999), a.l. for the reference to Matt. 16:18 and *Euangelia* 3.278–280 (see also A. Knappitsch, *Gai Uetti Aquilini Iuuenci euangeliorum libri quattuor: Liber III* (Graz, 1911–1912), p. 59).

63 See also the appreciation of Peter's opinion expressed by the additions *tuo . . . arbitrio* in 284–285 and *tua sententia* in 286; *exsuperabile* in 281 and its reference to *Georgica* 4.39 are discussed by Green, *Latin Epics*, p. 60.

64 See the commentary by Bauer, *Kommentar zum dritten Buch*, p. 161, for the implication of the versification of 276–277.

This is the versification of Matt. 16:18a: *Et ego dico tibi, tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam*. The underlined verses in Juvencus' text do not have a counterpart in the gospel. These verses are clearly meant to give honour to the apostle. Implicitly, his faith is deemed powerful (*tam ualidum*), his virtue is praised (*digna uirtute*) and although the word-play *Petrus-petra* is lost in Juvencus' versification, the poet evidently elaborated on the name and its significance with the addition of *saxique in robore* and *semper mansuras aeternis moenibus* (*aedes*).[65]

Of course, the figure of Peter was not always necessary to connect apostleship and fourth century episcopate. Besides an indication for the twelve disciples of Christ, the term *apostolus, apostolicus* and related forms were often used to denote Peter and Paul (which shows their status as *principes apostolorum*), but also to designate martyrs or bishops.[66] In Paulinus' *Carmen* 25.62, an episcopal family is referred to with *gentis apostolicae*. In this way the apostolic origin of the bishop's function was emphasized.

7 Conclusion

All poets with an oeuvre of considerable length refer in some way to Matt. 16:18–9 or at least link Rome to the martyrdom of the apostle Peter.[67] This is to say that they all contributed to the position of the Roman bishop and its status as *primus inter pares* among Christian bishops. Proba is an exception. It does not seem to be coincidental that the only poet with no official position in the church, and not likely to have had a high position (due to her gender), did not pay attention in her poetry to the internal politics of the church.[68] The other poets were close to or part of the official hierarchy of the church and reflected and disseminated its politics and ideas in their poetry. Some of them did this out of clear self-interest, like Damasus, but others could of course also profit from a good relationship with the clergy. Personal conviction played a role too.

65 Verse 279 has been called a "überbordende Periphrase" by Bauer, *Kommentar zum dritten Buch*, p. 161. The exact wording of the line is disputed (id., pp. 161–162), but this does not influence my interpretation.

66 Meanings are particularly blurred in Paulinus' work. He refers to martyrs with the term in (e.g.) *carmen* 27.440–448 and in *Epist*. 32.8, verse 2, but does also exclusively mean the apostles by it—in contrast with other martyrs—in *Epist*. 32.10.

67 Ambrose and Amphilochius of whom we only have a small poetic oeuvre do not refer to it.

68 It is improbable that Proba did not realise that she left out this passage. She was well aware of the choice of her material, *pace* Kirsch, *Die lateinische Versepik*, p. 137.

A belief in the outstanding position of Rome as the city where Peter as a successor of Christ underwent a martyr's death as well as a belief that the church could only survive with one leading bishop at its top. This concept of unity is also manifest in the poets' desire to promote the unity among the twelve apostles. Evidently, the poets at the same time referred to the general apostolic origin of the church, but the focus on Peter and his connection to Rome reveals that they also wanted to promote the bishop of Rome as leader of the church.

That poetry was an effective means of promoting concepts and ideas is clear from the varied audience it reached and its visibility within late antique society. Literally visually in the epigrams of Damasus and the *tituli*, but also present at the yearly feast day of Felix in Nola and in church through the hymns of Ambrose (and maybe Prudentius). The great advantage of poetry was its high esteem: in a culture in which the most venerated authors were Homer and especially Virgil, who acquired an almost divine status in the fourth century, the metrical form—and the hexameter in particular—could contribute to the authority of a message.[69] Early Christian poets took their poetry and its effectiveness very seriously: they felt that important issues as the promotion of the apostolic origin of Rome's episcopal see and the propagation of unity in the church via the unity among the first church of Christ and his disciples had to be spread in verses.

69 Cf. Alan Cameron, "Poetry and Literary Culture," p. 345: "(…) poetry, classicizing poetry, was *paideia* in its most concentrated form."

CHAPTER 11

A War of Words: Sermons and Social Status in Constantinople under the Theodosian Dynasty

*Peter Van Nuffelen**

1 Introduction

Sermons were social events. Addressing an important share of the local Christian population, they offered the bishop or presbyter a unique opportunity for moral and spiritual instruction. Notwithstanding repeated explicit rejections of classical rhetoric,[1] all preachers drew, to a greater or smaller degree, on the means of persuasion taught in the schools of rhetoric.[2] Research into the audience and its relationship with the preacher has helped us to understand the social and institutional context of late ancient preaching, notably demonstrating how specific sermons were targeted to a particular audience and

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1 See, e.g., Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* 4.3.

2 For overviews on the sometimes ambiguous relationship with classical rhetoric, see A. Wifstrand, *Die Alte Kirche und die griechische Bildung* (München, 1967); K. Berger, "Antike Rhetorik und christliche Homiletik," in C. Colpe, L. Honnefelder and M. Lutz-Bachmann, eds., *Spätantike und Christentum: Beiträge zur Religions- und Geistesgeschichte der griechisch-römischen Kultur und Zivilisation der Kaiserzeit* (Berlin, 1992), pp. 173–187; C. Schäublin, "Zum paganen Umfeld der christlichen Predigt," in E. Mühlenberg and J. Van Oort, eds., *Predigt in der alten Kirche* (Kampen, 1994), pp. 25–49; H. Leppin, "Der Prediger und der Mönch: Zur Bewertung christlicher Rede in der Spätantike," in C. Neumeister and W. Raeck, eds., *Rede und Redner: Bewertung und Darstellung in den antiken Kulturen* (Frankfurt, 2000), pp. 301–312; W. Kinzig, "The Greek Christian Writers," in S.E. Porter, ed., *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330 B.C.–A.D. 400* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 631–670; P. Gemeinhardt, *Das lateinische Christentum und die antike pagane Bildung* (Tübingen, 2007); J. Tloka, "Der Logos und die Logoi: Der Bedeutung der Rhetorik für die Konstituierung der christlichen Elite in der Spätantike," in F.R. Prostmeier and H.E. Lona, eds., *Logos der Vernunft—Logos des Glaubens* (Berlin, 2010), pp. 301–321; A.J. Quiroga Puertas, "*Vir sanctus dicendi peritus*: Rhetorical Delivery in Early Christian Rhetoric," in F. Mestre and P. Gómez, eds., *Three centuries of Greek culture under the Roman Empire? Homo romanus graeca oration* (Barcelona, 2013), pp. 347–56.

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how they could contribute to the construction of identity.[3] Less attention has gone to rhetoric as a means of gaining social status in a Christian context, that is, to the social context of the preacher (rather than that of the audience), in particular in the big cities of the empire.[4] Yet such a question deserves to be asked. In scholarship on the Second Sophistic, rhetoric is seen as the crucial means of social promotion: orators competed for public and imperial favour, and a political career without rhetorical prowess seemed improper at best.[5] Such perspectives have, so far, hardly been applied to Late Antiquity. It is still common to think that the social prestige of rhetoric declined in the fourth century and that orators withdrew into the school room to practise what had become a fossilized art.[6] The patristic emphasis on the virtue of humility,

3 J. Bernardi, *La prédication des pères cappadociens: Le prédicateur et son auditoire* (Paris, 1968); R. MacMullen, "The Preachers' audience (A.D. 350–400)," *Journal of Theological Studies* 40 (1989), 503–511; W. Mayer, "John Chrysostom and His Audiences: Distinguishing Different Congregations at Antioch and Constantinople," *Studia Patristica* 31 (1997), 70–75; W. Mayer, "John Chrysostom: Extraordinary Preacher, Ordinary Audience," in M.B. Cunningham and P. Allen, eds., *Preacher and Audience: Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics* (Leiden, 1998), pp. 105–137; P. Rousseau, "'The Preacher's Audience': A More Optimistic View," in T.W. Hillard, ed., *Ancient History in a Modern University*, vol. 1: *The ancient Near East, Greece, and Rome* (Grand Rapids, 1998), pp. 391–400; J. Leemans, "A Preacher-Audience Analysis of Gregory of Nyssa's Homily on Theodore the Recruit," *Studia Patristica* 38 (2001), 140–147; I. Sandwell, *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity: Greeks, Jews and Christians in Antioch* (Cambridge, 2007); J. Leemans, "Flexibele Heiligkeit: Der Beitrag der Märtyrer zur Identitätskonstitution christlicher Gemeinden im griechischen Osten im 4. Jahrhundert," in J. Leemans and P. Gemeinhardt, eds., *Heilig—Heiliges—Heiligkeit in der Spätantike* (Berlin, 2012), pp. 205–227.

4 Much attention has gone to preaching as a means to inculcate values and shape public opinion: see Kinzig, "Writers," pp. 653–655 for further references, and most recently B. Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge, 2011). P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, 1992), which importantly emphasizes the central role played by shared *paideia* in Late Antiquity, focuses more on rhetoric as a means to stabilize power for groups rather than the way it is used for social promotion by individuals.

5 See especially T. Schmitz, *Bildung und Macht: Zur sozialen und politischen Funktion der zweiten Sophistik in der griechischen Welt der Kaiserzeit* (München, 1997) and also S. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, A.D. 50–250* (Oxford, 1996); T. Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (Oxford, 2001); T. Whitmarsh, *The Second Sophistic* (Oxford, 2005); L. Van Hoof, *Plutarch's Practical Ethics: The Social Dynamics of Philosophy* (Oxford, 2010).

6 An important step is J. Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication in Late Antiquity: John Chrysostom and his Congregation in Antioch* (Cambridge, 2006), who however focuses more on the use of "Second Sophistic skills" (41) than on the nexus of rhetoric, social status, patronage and material benefits. L. Van Hoof, "Greek Rhetoric and the Later Roman Empire.

often expressed by preachers, probably makes it seem even more implausible to think of Christian rhetoric as a conscious means for social advancement. Scholars have shown that talented preachers regularly became bishops,[7] but seem to accept the view, conveyed by the preachers themselves, that rhetoric was a means for instruction: bishops who were elected for their rhetorical qualities were so because they were good teachers, not necessarily because they mastered rhetoric well. This chapter argues that such a perspective underestimates the role still played by rhetoric in public and ecclesiastical life in the fourth and fifth century. There is sufficient, albeit usually polemical, evidence that rhetorical talent was consciously exploited to become big in Church and society—even when such ambitions were covered under the cloak of humility. Focusing on a unique social environment, late fourth-century and early fifth-century Constantinople, I shall demonstrate that the Second Sophistic nexus of rhetorical performance, social status, patronage, and material benefits can still be seen operating among Christian preachers. Constantinople may have been a place without parallel. Many a provincial was attracted by the court and the prospect of social advancement it seemed to offer: the presence of the emperor rendered the game of power particularly complex but uniquely rewarding.[8] As said, this may have been a unique constellation. Yet, it is not an unlikely assumption that what happened in the metropolis of the empire happened in regional cities too.

2 Too Many Golden Mouths

According to late ancient accounts, the downfall of John Chrysostom in 403 and 404 was caused by a series of personal conflicts, of which those with the

The ‘Bubble’ of the ‘Third Sophistic’,” *Antiquité Tardive* 18 (2010), 211–224 and L. Van Hoof, “Performing *Paideia*: Greek Culture as an Instrument for Social Promotion in the Fourth Century A.D.,” *The Classical Quarterly* 63 (2013), 387–406 sets out ways of introducing approaches pioneered in the Second Sophistic to fourth century material.

7 Kinzig, “Writers,” p. 653 refers to scholars who have shown the importance of rhetoric in ecclesiastical power and promotion: see in particular Bernardi, *La prédication*; R. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1988), pp. 70–95; Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, passim.

8 Cf. Alan Cameron, “The Empress and the Poet: Paganism and Politics at the Court of Theodosius II,” *Yale Classical Studies* 27 (1982), 217–290; P. Van Nuffelen, “Playing the Ritual Game in Constantinople under the Theodosian Dynasty (379–457 A.D.),” in L. Grig and G. Kelly, eds., *Two Romes: From Rome to Constantinople* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 183–200 with further references.

empress Eudoxia and bishop Theophilus of Alexandria are the most important.[9] Other enemies include two Syrian bishops, Antiochus of Ptolemais in Phenicia and Severian of Gabala in Syria. Both men were celebrated for their rhetorical ability and had come to Constantinople to exploit this talent. According to the church historian Socrates (writing ca. 440), Antiochus returned home "after having taught with diligence in the churches for some time and having made much profit out of this" (πολλὰ ἐκ τούτων χρηματισάμενος).[10] Socrates' contemporary Sozomen even notes that Antiochus was called 'chrysostom'.[11] Inspired by such a demonstration of the gains to be made in Constantinople, Severian intensified his rhetorical training, composed many a discourse, and travelled to the capital. He was well-received by John Chrysostom and allowed to preach, becoming known to the emperor and high officials.[12] His popularity increased even more when John was absent from the capital for a while when settling the episcopal succession in Ephesus in 401–402.[13] This caused a conflict with John's deacon Sarapion, who felt Severian was assuming too important a place in the ecclesiastic life of the city. It is unclear what the precise position of Severian was during John's absence. Sozomen claims that John officially appointed Severian as his temporary stand-in and that Severian's success made him jealous.[14] Socrates' account suggests that Severian filled the vacuum of eloquence during John's mission to Ephesus on his own initiative.[15]

A similar depiction, at once more hostile and more precise, is given by Pseudo-Martyrius in his *Epitaphios* for John Chrysostom, held shortly after the latter's death. He accuses Antiochus and Severian of using their oratory

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9 Overviews in P.C. Baur, *Der heilige Johannes Chrysostomus und seine Zeit*, 2 vols. (München, 1930); J.N.D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom: Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (London, 1995); C. Tiersch, *Johannes Chrysostomus in Konstantinopel (398–404): Weltsicht und Wirken eines Bischofs in der Hauptstadt des Oströmischen Reiches* (Tübingen, 2000).

10 Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.11.4.

11 Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 8.10.1.

12 Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.11.7.

13 For the date, see Alan Cameron and J. Long, *Barbarians and Politics at the Court of Arcadius* (Berkeley, 1993), Appendix 2.

14 Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 8.10.3.

15 Severian is much better known than Antiochus, as a substantial number of sermons haven been preserved, in particular among the Pseudo-Chrysostomica: J. Zellinger, *Studien zu Severian von Gabala* (Münster, 1926); H.D. Altendorf, *Untersuchungen zu Severian von Gabala* (Tübingen, 1957); C. Datema, "Towards a Critical Edition of the Greek Homilies of Severian of Gabala," *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 19 (1988), 107–115; K.-H. Uthemann, "Severian von Gabala in Photios' Bibliothek und Amphilochia: Überlegungen zu den Dubia Severiani," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 43 (1993), 61–86.

to achieve leadership: “He [John Chrysostom] did not use oratory to please the ears as they [i.e. Severianus of Gabala and Antiochus of Ptolemais] did but to nourish the souls, and he thus robbed them entirely of the chance to make a profit (τῆς ἐμπορίας αὐτοῖς τὰς ἀφορμάς). Having considered it opportune to speak some time before at the time of the dearth [of sermons] and for this reason imagining that the leadership of this church was theirs, they thought to be able to realise entirely this lawless and mad desire, now that the father [John] had been exiled.”[16] The dearth Pseudo-Martyrius refers to is probably the episcopacy of Nectarius (381–397), who seems not to have been very eloquent. According to Pseudo-Martyrius, some individuals, including Antiochus and Severian, tried to compensate for this, and they hoped therefore to become bishop after Nectarius' death. This depiction obviously contradicts that of Socrates and Sozomen, who state that Severian arrived when John was already bishop.[17] Most likely, Pseudo-Martyrius has displaced Severian's arrival in the capital to a moment before John's election with the aim of better underlining the dangerous connection between rhetoric and ambition he notices in the minds of Severian and Antiochus. Yet it is not just ambition that is attacked, but also the type of oratory practised by Severian. According to Pseudo-Martyrius, Severian, “bishop of the smallest town in Syria”, composed “few discourses out of many” (ὀλίγα ἐκ πολλῶν συνειληχότα), “thirsty to water the people with those small and many-fathered orations” (διψῶντα ποτίζειν τὸν λαὸν τοῖς μικροῖς ἐκείνοις καὶ πολυπάτορσι λόγοις). True eloquence as practiced by John is immediately contrasted with this unoriginal and unsubstantial rhetoric. The contrast is not accidental: as we shall see below, Pseudo-Martyrius' accusations echo the ideas expressed in the treatise *On priesthood*, in which John sets out his view on true Christian oratory.

If anything, the three reports surveyed so far illustrate the polemic that followed John's deposition and subsequent death in exile. Notwithstanding the important differences between the three authors, the accusations are remarkably consistent. All agree that Severian and Antiochus seek to achieve success through oratory, success that is measured in wealth (they accept money for their sermons) and in social status (they ingratiate themselves at court). A further accusation is implicit in Socrates and Sozomen but explicit in Pseudo-Martyrius: they compete with John Chrysostom for popularity and leadership of his Church. Some important conclusions can be drawn from what are obviously biased accounts. It was clearly thought possible to achieve social and ecclesiastical prestige through preaching in Constantinople and

16 Pseudo-Martyrius, *Epitaphius* 45.

17 See note 10–12 above.

popularity as a preacher was seen as a threat to the status of the bishop of the city. In other words, ideally and in a situation of social stability, the bishop of Constantinople had to be its most popular preacher. Yet, apparently, he had to fend off challenges to his authority from other preachers who travelled to Constantinople to attract crowds, popularity, and, ultimately, status and power. Thus, the accusations brought against Antiochus and Severian open up quite a different world from our usual perspective on Christian sermons. They conjure up a world of competition and careerism apparently at odds with the traditional focus on instruction and humility. Indeed, they show that the view that rhetoric only serves instruction, reflected in the humility of the preacher, is a *topos* that serves to morally rank individuals. Severian and Antiochus fail to comply with this ideal and are thus talented but ambitious individuals; John obviously is made to fit the ideal by Pseudo-Martyrius. Yet, Pseudo-Martyrius cannot but admit that John also beat Severian and Antiochus on their own ground: John clearly attracts the crowds that the others hoped to win for themselves and he thus succeeds in cutting off the profits they want to make out of it—this implies that the profits now went to him. Whilst the moral discourse sets John apart from Antiochus and Severian, all participate in the same social system in which rhetorical and social success are closely linked.

3 Good and Bad Rhetoric

As I shall argue below, the johannite polemic sheds a unique light on social mechanisms that can be detected in other sources too. Before we turn to that, however, we need to have a closer look at a more immediate source of inspiration for the polemic, that is, John Chrysostom himself. In his treatise *On priesthood*, John Chrysostom gives pride of place to oratory.[18] Being a teacher, a priest must be able to give good sermons. In the various circumstances that face a priest, competition often plays a crucial role. Of minor importance here is religious competition: in a society that was religiously pluralistic, a priest had to be able to face off opponents in debates: indeed, if one performs badly in a debate, the audience may well conclude that one's beliefs are deficient.[19] Within one's community, competition is driven by the audience.

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18 On the work, see A.-M. Malingrey, *Jean Chrysostome: Sur le sacerdoce: Dialogue et homélie*, (Sources chrétiennes) 272 (Paris, 1980); M. Lochbrunner, *Über das Priestertum: Historische und systematische Untersuchung zum Priesterbild des Johannes Chrysostomos* (Bonn, 1993); Leppin, "Der Prediger und der Mönch," pp. 304–308.

19 John Chrysostom, *De sacerdotio* 4.5.

It may (mistakenly) think it is learned and hence take on the role of spectators 'as among those who attend secular games'.[20] Such an audience is not easily satisfied: it may, for example, object when it thinks the orator is using someone else's script.[21] Such a critique is known from Libanius,[22] and John's audience shares more attitudes with secular rhetoric: 'the people are used to listen not for usefulness but for pleasure' (οὐ γὰρ πρὸς ὠφέλειαν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τέρψιν ἀκούειν εἰθίσθησαν οἱ πολλοί).[23] Audiences, moreover, compare orators and may boo someone, even if he is actually better than another.[24] There is, indeed, a real passion for oratory among Christians.[25] A priest can thus not abandon oratory as such and in order to avoid that he will be swept away by popular acclaim or depressed by a less forthcoming response, John Chrysostom banks on moral counsel. The preacher should avoid feeling flattered by praise, so as to avoid vainglory when applauded and disappointment when booed. Such an attitude permits the priest to focus on educating his audience rather than pleasing it.[26]

The audience as depicted by John behaves very much like the audiences known from the Second Sophistic,[27] which also prided themselves in their knowledge of rhetoric and did not hesitate to express their likes and dislikes.

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20 John Chrysostom, *De sacerdotio* 5.1. It is a traditional comparison, see A. Olivar, *La predicación cristiana antigua* (Barcelona, 1991), p. 850, with reference to, e.g. Augustine, *Epist*. 44.1.

21 John Chrysostom, *De sacerdotio* 5.1.

22 For an orator stealing Libanius' work, see *Oratio* 1.113–114.

23 John Chrysostom, *De sacerdotio* 5.1. See also John Chrysostom, *Homilia 30 in Acta apostolorum* 3 PG 60: 225, *De prophetiarum obscuritate* 1 *PG* 56: 165, *De incomprehensibilitate Dei naturae* 1.334–338.

24 John Chrysostom, *De sacerdotio* 5.5–6. For parallels, see Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 42.24, 26; Theodoretus, *Epist*. 83, 90; Hesychius of Jerusalem, *Homilia festalis* 6.5. For criticism of a preacher by the audience, see John Chrysostom, *De mutatione nominum homilia* 3 *PG* 51: 131.

25 John Chrysostom, *De sacerdotio* 5.8. Olivar, *La predicación*, pp. 776–777, 834–867 demonstrates the eagerness and interaction of the audience. See also Lochbrunner, *Über das Priestertum*, pp. 163–167; Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication*, 62–63.

26 See also John Chrysostom, *De statuis* 2 *PG* 49: 38, *Non esse ad gratiam concionandum PG* 50: 653–662; Basil of Caesarea, *Homiliae PG* 31: 384. *De sacerdotio* supports the more optimistic view on popular understanding of sermons defended by Rousseau, " 'The Preacher's Audience'," against R. MacMullen, "The Preacher's Audience."

27 See M. Korenjak, *Publikum und Redner: Ihre Interaktion in der sophistischen Rhetorik der Kaiserzeit* (München, 2000), pp. 68–95; Whitmarsh, *The Second Sophistic*, pp. 25–6. For stylistic influences of the Second Sophistic on Christian sermons, see Kinzig, "Writers," p. 647. For similar responses to pagan oratory, see Libanius, *Oratio* 11.189–190, 25.50–51 with R. Cribiore, *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch* (Princeton, 2007), pp. 202–203.

This generated competition between orators and such competition can still be detected in John's depiction of the audiences for Christan sermons: they compared preachers and vented their views. It was not easy for preachers not to take part in this competition, as is shown by John's moral advice that the preacher should not be directed by the whims and shouts of the audience, disengage from the desire for popular acclaim,[28] and focus on teaching. If anything, such advice demonstrates that it was not easy not to be carried away by success or depressed by bad responses. Moreover, John presumes that one cannot change the audience: it is the preacher who must change. Yet it is not his rhetorical practice that should change: the audience demands rhetoric and rhetoric it shall get. But that rhetoric should be directed towards moral aims, that is, instruction, and, crucially, the preacher should avoid giving in to his desire for success. Strikingly, thus, John leaves the nexus of rhetoric, popular acclaim, and social status intact. He asks the preacher to disengage mentally but not in praxis.

Here the seeds are sown for social conflict. John's plea for disengagement is predicated on the fact that the preacher, as priest or bishop, receives his authority from Church and God. Popular acclaim should not be the source of his status:[29] he occupies his position to educate the people. His social status is, thus, in principle unrelated to his talent as preacher. At the same time, however, John admits that the people attribute social status to preachers on the basis of their rhetorical talent. It is clear that in Antioch, where the treatise was written, people expressed their pleasure and displeasure, compared preachers and had favourites. One's position in the ecclesiastical hierarchy could, therefore, be different from the position one had in the esteem of the people. As the Church tended to limit the right to preach, the potential disconnect between both types of status did not need to generate conflicts. In cities where many preachers practised, however, the bishop's status could be challenged if he systematically underperformed in comparison with other preachers.

All in all, then, *On priesthood* shows that the social mechanism that underpinned public oratory during the Second Sophistic remained largely intact: rhetorical prowess could lead to an increase in social status, even in the Church. As the accusations brought against Severian and Antiochus by Pseudo-Martyrius demonstrate, this generated conflict, when rhetorical performance did not match institutional status. Because they emphasize the *topos* of humility, the

28 See John Chrysostom, *Commentaria in Johannem* 3.1 PG 59: 37, *Commentaria ad 1 Cor.: Homilia* 32.6 PG 61: 271.

29 For the differences sources of authority in a Christian context, see C. Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley, 2005).

sources tend to obscure this mechanism, but it is very prominent on closer inspection. For Pseudo-Martyrius the status acquired through rhetorical performance and institutional status should coincide. For his argument, it would have been enough to accuse Severian and Antiochus of thinking without due justification that rhetorical success was the basis on which a bishop should be elected. He could thus have emphasized that a bishop's authority derives from a different source. Yet Pseudo-Martyrius' argument is different. He focuses on the bad rhetoric of Severian, which is precisely the type of oratory that John rejected in his treatise: Severian cobbles together sermons out of pre-existing ones[30] and his pieces are small and designed to please the audience and thus fail to instruct. To that a moral evaluation is added: Severian and Antiochus are vainglorious[31] and use their rhetoric to ingratiate themselves among the masses. John Chrysostom defeats his opponent on both accounts: his rhetoric is original and of the highest level and he instructs the people with true and humble teaching. Crucially, John sways the people. Even less than John himself, then, Pseudo-Martyrius was willing to sever the link between rhetorical success and status: the bishop should be the best preacher in town.

4 Money and Patronage

Receiving money for a sermon was, in Christian thought, the hallmark of secular, "pagan" rhetoric. So much was explicitly affirmed by Jerome,[32] and in the pseudonymous correspondence with Libanius, Basil of Caesarea remarked that no bishop ever made a trade out of his rhetoric.[33] Heretics, obviously, were not held by such probity: according to Eusebius, the Montanists paid their preachers.[34] Notwithstanding this ideal, money was donated to preachers: if not officially a reward for a sermon, it could be represented as a contribution to the good works performed by the bishop.[35] The practice is attested for the court of Justinian and was sufficiently widespread for brigands to be depicted

30 On such practices, see P. Allen and C. Datema, "Leontius, Presbyter of Constantinope: A Compiler?," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 29 (1980), 9–20.

31 Cf. C. Datema, "Severian of Gabala: a modest man?," *Studia Patristica* 22 (1989), 104–107.

32 Jerome, *Epist*. 10.3.

33 Basil of Caesarea, *Epist*. 338. See also John Chrysostom, *Ad Theodorum lapsum* 2.18.

34 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.18. 2, and also 5.28. 10. An example from the sixth century is Severus of Antioch, *Select Letters* 6.1. 13, ed. E.W. Brooks (London, 1902), p. 55.

35 Some biblical passages refer to remuneration for the preacher (Lc 10.4, 7–8, 1 Cor 9.4–9 and 1 Tim 5.17–18) but this was, it seems, always spiritually interpreted: Gregory the Great, *In Evangelia homilia* 17.5. 7–8 *PL* 76: 1140, and in general Olivar, *La predicación*, pp. 587–588.

as targeting a holy man who returned from court.[36] Instead of money, gifts could be given too.[37] The practice probably existed already at the Theodosian court: an anecdote from the *Life of Rabbula*, the anti-nestorian bishop of Edessa (411–435), illustrates how the acceptance of gifts was not without risk for the bishop. At the beginning of the Nestorian controversy, Rabbula travelled to Constantinople and held a sermon against Nestorius in the presence of the bishop of Constantinople. When the emperor wished to reward him, Rabbula refused—although he had accepted gifts in the past: 'But when the emperors and the honoured ones in person brought a great deal of gold, with ornaments and clothing, to him, and they asked him to receive their offerings, he was fearful and said, "although truly the actions which forced me to come up here are evident, perhaps it might seem to them that I sought a false pretext by which I could come before them and take gifts from them." '[38] In this account, Rabbula is depicted as concerned about his position as defender of the faith: accepting the money would lead to questions being raised about the sincerity of his motifs.

This evidence, admittedly of a scattered nature, suggests that the practice of Christian preachers was much more like that of secular orators than they cared to admit. Indeed, only rhetorical training was something that was paid for: it is unlikely that orators received a wage for their public performances.[39] Rather, they too could look forward to gifts and material benefits. Moreover, payments of one's teacher of rhetoric often took the form of gifts, and such gifts-as-payments can be hard to distinguish from "real" gifts[40]—if such a distinction needs to be made. Christian preachers obviously did not receive a stipend for their sermons: they received one from the church in which they were incardinated for their clerical duties. Yet a successful sermon could be rewarded with gifts, especially when it attracted the elite. It was probably in this way that Severian and Antiochus gathered the fortune they took home:

36 John of Ephesus, *Lives of Eastern Saints*, PO 18.531, 536, 632–633, 635.

37 E.g. Augustine, *opus imperfectum* 1.42, CSEL 85.1, pp. 30–31; Marc the Deacon, *Life of Porphyry of Gaza* 36–40. See R. MacMullen, "What difference did Christianity make?," *Historia* 35 (1986), 322–343, at pp. 339–341.

38 R. Doran, *Stewards of the Poor: The Man of God, Rabbula, and Hiba in Fifth-Century Edessa* (Kalamazoo, 2006), p. 97.

39 For rewards for sophistic performances, see Schmitz, *Bildung und Macht*, pp. 50–63. For fees for education, see Cribiore, *The School of Libanius*, pp. 183–191. Note in particular the anecdote in Philostratus (*Vitae sophistarum* 1,25, 538) about the whopping fee of 250 000 drachmes that Herodes Atticus gave to Polemon. See also Philostratus, *Vitae sophistarum* 1.10, 494 on Protagoras as the first to receive a wage for *dialexeis*.

40 Cribiore, *The School of Libanius*, pp. 183–191.

their talent ingratiated them with elite patrons, who showered gifts on them. If this is the case, however, we cannot but assume that gifts were offered to John Chrysostom too and that the competition for popular acclaim also had a pecuniary aspect to it. This is obviously not to suggest that John (or, for that matter, Severian and Antiochus) just preached because of money and kept it for himself. A good bishop used what he received for charitable ends. But gifts were a tangible expression of esteem and status, and almsgiving was also a social practice that bought a good standing with God and man.[41] As the tale of Rabbula shows, it was important to handle gifts well: a bishop obviously needed to avoid acquiring the reputation Severian and Antiochus seem to have had.

The emperor was not the only one to hand out gifts: Constantinople was rich in circles and networks that combined literature and patronage. Palladius, another supporter of John Chrysostom writing in the early fifth century, notes that the famous widow Olympias, a devotee of John, had not only supported Antiochus and Severian, but also donated "land and money" (κτήματα ἀγρῶν καὶ χρήματα) to Amphilochius of Iconium, Optimus of Antioch in Pisidia, Gregory (of Nyssa?), Peter, the brother of Basil the Great, and Epiphanius of Cyprus.[42] This list contains preachers of good and bad repute, enemies and friends of John, suggesting that Olympias was rather indiscriminate in her favours. It may have been Palladius' explicit wish to generate that impression, so as to have her magnanimity overshadow her bad judgment in supporting enemies of John. If Olympias can be seen as representing the patronage of piety more than that of literature, other networks clearly put literature at the heart of their attention. Synesius' letters refer to a circle called the *Panhellenion* in Constantinople, and led by a certain Marcian.[43] We do not know if other bishops besides Synesius were actively involved. The church historian Socrates testifies to the existence of a literary circle centred on the sophist Troilus and the prefect Anthemius, which gathered the secular as well as the ecclesiastical elite of the city of the early fifth century.[44] In a letter of recommendation to the *praepositus sacri cubiculi* Lausus, probably written in the 420s, Firmus of Caesarea alludes to the potential of Lausus' circle of associates and to the largesses that he showers on

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41 R. Finn, *Almsgiving in the Later Roman Empire: Christian Promotion and Practice (313–450)* (Oxford, 2006).

42 Palladius, *Dialogus* 17.199.

43 Synesius, *Epist.* 79, 101, 119. Cameron and Long, *Barbarians and Politics*, pp. 71–83 fail to distinguish the *Panhellenion* from the circle of Anthemius.

44 P. Van Nuffelen, *Un héritage de paix et de piété: Étude sur les Histoires ecclésiastiques de Socrate et de Sozomène* (Louvain, 2004), pp. 15–25.

them (elegantly referred to as almsgiving).[45] Lausus, as is well known, was the dedicatee of Palladius' *Lausiac history* and in all likelihood commissioned it.[46] In Anthemius' circle, and thus probably in the others as well, contemporary literature was read and, as clergy participated in it, it is not unlikely to suppose that sermons were not excluded. Indeed, sermons could be admired for their style: sometimes beautiful figures of style were noted down on the spot.[47] Stenographed, copied, and circulated, sermons would be admired for their stylistic qualities.[48]

Centred on powerful and rich individuals, these circles were hotspots of literary patronage. The association with a powerful figure was obviously a mark of esteem in itself, leaving aside the possible material benefits that it could generate. Yet there were other benefits too of association with the elite: John Chrysostom indicates that patronage could affect the attendance during a sermon, as clients might come to listen to a certain preacher so as to be seen by their patron.[49] In addition, it is not an unlikely supposition that the patron of a visiting preacher in Constantinople could lean on the local bishop to get an occasion to preach and present oneself to the public.

As social events, then, sermons were much more than the instruction of an audience by a preacher: given the link between rhetorical success and status, a sermon could also be part of a strategy of social promotion and a struggle for status and wealth in a world of complex and competing social networks. Such social promotion could serve personal interests, but this need not be the case: ulterior ends, such as the defence of orthodoxy and the care of the poor, may have driven these strategies. Nevertheless, such strategies were incarnated in the person of the successful preacher who competed with others.[50]

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45 Firmus of Caesarea, *Epist.* 9. See also *Epist.* 13, where the reference to money might conceal a demand for the Olympius mentioned there to become member of the clergy.

46 C. Rapp, "Palladius, Lausus and the Historia Lausiaca," in C. Sode and S. Takács, eds., *Novum millennium: Studies on Byzantine History and Culture dedicated to Paul Speck* (Aldershot, 2001), pp. 279–289. N. Constas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity: Homilies 1–5, texts and translations* (Leiden, 2003), p. 55 suggests a circle around Pulcheria that challenged Nestorius.

47 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 42.26; cf. Olivar, *La predicación*, pp. 902–922.

48 Severus of Antioch, *Select Letters* 6.1.14, ed. E.W. Brooks (London, 1902), p. 59.

49 John Chrysostom, *In 2 Thes. homiliae* 3 PG 62: 483.59–484.74.

50 For competition as a feature of the Second Sophistic, see Whitmarsh, *The Second Sophistic*, pp. 37–40. See Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication*, pp. 29–33 for Christian competition with pagan philosophers and pp. 45–47 for rhetorical competition in the fourth century.

5 Competition and Conflict

The episcopacy offered a platform for rhetorical display, as Libanius noted when Amphilochius acceded to the see of Iconium.[51] Rhetorical qualities could indeed be a reason for one's election, as is explicitly alleged for John Chrysostom and Nestorius.[52] One might expect that the average bishop had the floor to himself in his home town: in principle, there was only one bishop in every city (discounting the presence of multiple bishops of 'heretical' groups, which was a common feature in the fourth century). This may have been true in many cases but not always: presbyters were also allowed to preach and could do so in a different church or before the bishop could take the floor. Bigger cities indeed possessed more than one church, each with different preachers.[53] This set the scene for the type of competition we noticed between Severian and John Chrysostom: preachers in different churches could compete in attracting the biggest crowd. Indeed, John Chrysostom complains in a sermon that his usual audiences are attracted by another bishop who is preaching in Constantinople.[54]

Yet a more direct form of confrontation was possible. The anecdote about Rabbula shows that it was common for a visiting bishop to deliver a sermon in the presence of his host.[55] These were not always pleasant occasions. John Chrysostom narrates how he hosted a fellow bishop from Galatia and allowed him to preach, as custom demanded. He does not hide his pleasure at the fact that the people ran away from that preacher first, expressing their desire to hear only himself.[56] In Jerusalem, Epiphanius of Salamis preached alongside the local bishop John. According to Jerome, John preached first against the

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51 Libanius, *Epist.* 1453. See Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication*, pp. 37–40.

52 Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.2, 7.29. For other examples, see Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.30.9; Augustine, *Epist.* 2*, 69; Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 99; Barhadbessaba, *Historia ecclesiastica* 31.

53 Olivar, *La predicación*, pp. 554–556.

54 John Chrysostom, *In Epistulam ad Ephesios* PG 62: 87–88: see W. Mayer, "At Constantinople, How Often Did John Chrysostom Preach? Addressing Assumptions about the Workload of a Bishop," *Sacris Erudiri* 40 (2001), 83–105, at p. 101.

55 For the principle, see Severus, *Homiliae cathedrales* 58 PO 8.209. See also Basil of Caesarea, *Epist.* 351, *Homiliae* 11.5 *PG* 31: 384B; John Chrysostom, *De beato philogono* *PG* 48: 748.2–3, *Adversus catharos* *PG* 63: 491.4–13; *PG* 63: 523.

56 John Chrysostom, *In illud: Pater meus* PG 63: 511.39–512.2. See also John Chrysostom, *In Eph. hom II PG* 62: 87.28–88.28 for a congregation that has moved to a different church. For John's popularity, see John Chrysostom, *In illud: Filius ex se ipso nihil facit PG* 56: 247. See Olivar, *La predicación*, pp. 557–560 and p. 775.

so-called anthropomorphites and suggested that Epiphanius was an adherent of their doctrine. John had seemingly preached too long and may have breached custom by preaching first. This gave Epiphanius the springboard for a devastating swipe at his host. He delivered the briefest of sermons: “All that has been said against the heresy of the anthropomorphites by my brother and colleague, my son in age, has been said well and faithfully. What has been condemned, I also do with my voice. But equally in the manner in which we have condemned this heresy, we ought also to condemn the perverse doctrines of Origen.”[57] Not only did Epiphanius deflect the criticism of John, he also swayed the public with his implicit but clear condemnation of John’s lengthy oration and his lack of propriety in speaking before his elder guest. Epiphanius made the public laugh and earned their applause. This episode demonstrates that even when sermons concerned technical theological issues, a good rhetorical performance was one of the weapons in the battle—so much was indeed admitted by John Chrysostom in *On priesthood*, as we have seen. Preparation was not all that mattered: wit, improvization, and a sense for the mood of the audience could help to gain cause.

Indeed, even in doctrinal controversies rhetorical competition could play a crucial role. According to the church historian Socrates, an eye-witness to the events, the Nestorian controversy in the early 430s was driven more by social and rhetorical motives than by profound theological reflection. According to him, the controversy started when the Antiochene presbyter Anastasius, the right hand of Nestorius, preached “Let no one call Mary *Theotokos*.” This statement stirred up controversy in the church, but Nestorius, “for he did not wish to have the man who was esteemed by himself found guilty of blasphemy” delivered several public sermons on the subject and rejected the epithet. For Socrates, this rejection was to be explained by Nestorius’ ignorance: a natural talent as an orator, he failed to study the traditions of the Church Fathers with due care.[58] The fear for loss of face (in this case, vicariously), more than theological exactitude, drove Nestorius’ actions. This may be an underestimation of the bishop’s intellectual abilities, but the important point in this context is that Socrates could think of it as rhetoric to preserve status. The historian also notes that the doctrinal battle was fought in Constantinople through sermons, often

57 Jerome, *Contra Iohannem* 11, trans. Y.R. Kim, “Epiphanius of Cyprus vs. John of Jerusalem: An Improper Ordination and the Escalation of the Origenist Controversy,” in J. Leemans, P. Van Nuffelen, S.J. Keough, and C. Nicolaye, eds., *Episcopal Elections in Late Antiquity* (Berlin, 2011), pp. 411–422, at p. 415.

58 Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.32. On this episode, see Constas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, pp. 52–53.

competitive ones. The first to challenge Nestorius was Eusebius, later bishop of Dorylaeum but then an orator,[59] who interrupted a sermon of Nestorius.[60] Proclus, then bishop of Cyzicus but a longstanding contender for the see of Constantinople, delivered a series of sermons against Nestorius, apparently in the presence of the latter.[61] Nestorius replied immediately to some of them, tellingly starting by saying that he did not seek to have applause—an indication of the success Proclus had enjoyed but also an attempt to suggest in a Chrysostomian vein[62] that Proclus was more after success than truth.[63] The congregation thus had the unique chance to have the two doctrinal positions set out in one church service—and in a rhetorical format. Indeed, at the council of Ephesus (431), Nestorius would be deposed on the basis of the sermons he had preached.[64] Again, the point cannot be that doctrine did not play a crucial role in these controversies (just as differences in philosophical opinion impacted on debates of the Second Sophistic). Yet it is important to see that they were carried out in a social environment in which not just the right view but also rhetorical prowess could determine social status.

6 Conclusion

John Chrysostom explicitly testifies to the craze for rhetoric among Christians in Antioch. We have no similar direct evidence for Constantinople, but the

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59 Evagrius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.9.

60 Cyril of Alexandria, *Contra Nestorium* 1.5 (E. Schwartz, ed., *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum. I.1.6 Concilium universale ephesenum* (Berlin, 1927), pp. 25–26): see Constas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, p. 54.

61 On Proclus, see J.H. Barkhuizen, "Proclus of Constantinople: A Popular Preacher in Fifth-Century Constantinople," in Cunningham and Allen, eds., *Preacher and Audience*, pp. 179–200 and Constas, *Proclus of Constantinople*.

62 It was probably a standard reproach (brought against Nestorius by Theodoretus, *Hereticarum fabularum compendium* 4.12), but it is interesting to note that Nestorius' sermons seem to imitate John's: F. Nau, *Documents pour servir à l'histoire de l'église nestorienne* (Paris, 1919), p. 115.

63 The sermon is known through a translation by Marius Mercator (E. Schwartz, ed., *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum. I.5.1. Concilium universale ephesenum*. Volumen quintum (Berlin, 1924), pp. 37–39). See F. Loofs, *Nestoriana* (Halle, 1911), p. 277, pp. 336–341. For applause for Nestorius, see E. Schwartz, ed., *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum. I.2. Concilium universale ephesenum. Volumen alterum Collectio Veronensis* (Berlin, 1925), p. 61. For a similar opposition of truth and success, see Jerome, *Epist.* 52.8 (an anecdote attributed to Gregory of Nazianzus).

64 Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.34.

same must have held true there. As we have seen, the city attracted rhetorically talented bishops, who did their very best when they had a chance to preach there: apparently, twenty-six of Gregory of Nyssa's preserved sermons were preached in Constantinople.[65] Moreover, for most of the bishops of Theodosian Constantinople we possess explicit statements about their rhetorical talent or the lack thereof: as we have seen, John and Nestorius[66] were explicitly chosen for their golden mouths, whereas Nectarius,[67] Atticus,[68] and Flavian[69] were reputed to lack talent in this respect. Proclus' talent was evident. Obviously, such assessments tend to recur in polemical contexts and can thus not claim to state the ultimate truth about the rhetorical prowess of these bishops. Yet, their recurrence shows that rhetorical talent was a quality a bishop was expected to have. Indeed, when Gregory of Nazianzus took leave from Constantinople, he noted that his congregation did not look out for a new bishop but for an orator.[70]

The emphasis on rhetorical talent is unsurprising: sermons were a very common form of interaction between a bishop and his community, and thus important occasions for asserting one's leadership. Given the institutional advantages a bishop enjoyed (he was in principle the main preacher of his church and held his position for life), even a modestly talented orator could speak from a relatively safe position. In a small city, relatively few alternative options would be available if the local bishop had a tongue of wood. Constantinople was different: challenges to the bishop's authority were multiple and omnipresent. As a major ecclesiastical centre, many bishops paid a visit to the city and were expected to be hosted and given a chance to express themselves. Some of these consciously absented themselves for a long time from their cities of origin to benefit from the possibilities of elite and imperial patronage. Even when they were mere long-term visitors, too much success on their part could weaken a bishop's grip on his church: embarrassment was the least of feelings if the community preferred to go and listen to someone

65 Olivar, *La predicación*, p. 557.

66 The *Letter of Cosmas* (Nau, *Documents*, p. 280) notes that people came to church to hear Nestorius preach.

67 Pseudo-Martyrius, *Epitaphius* 45.

68 Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.2, who notes that Atticus improved his performance through intensive training but that he never received much applause and that his sermons were note taken down.

69 Nestorius, *Liber Heracleidis*, p. 294 applies what Socrates says to Flavian.

70 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 42.24.

else instead of the local bishop.[71] When imperial and elite patronage and the resources attached to it were deflected to one of these strangers, more harsh feelings could arise: such interlopers could be suspected of using their rhetorical talent to ingratiate themselves with the populace and the elite—key supporters when it ever would come to electing a new bishop. Not only the bishop would thus become dissatisfied: the anger of Sarapion, John Chrysostom's archdeacon, at the success of Severian may also have been inspired by the fact that Severian was acquiring support that would be of very good use when it came to replacing John. A city such as Constantinople with many churches and many visitors offered numerous platforms for possible challengers to the local bishop and clergy.

Sermons therefore remain only partially understood as social events, if we just focus on how they provided spiritual instruction in the interaction between preacher and audience. Equally, we should try to avoid taking for true descriptions of reality the polemical accusations that only some morally (and usually also theologically) flawed bishops preached for personal advancement.[72] John Chrysostom as much as Severian of Gabala was caught up in a social context in which rhetorical prowess, social status, episcopal authority, patronage, and material benefits were closely linked. Without a public appreciation of his elegant argument and suave sermon, Severian of Gabala would not have been able to make his career in Constantinople, but nor would have been John Chrysostom himself. Indeed, there is evidence that John consciously used his preaching skills to increase the Nicene community.[73] Crucially, it was the popular and elite comparison of preachers that spurred the competition for authority and patronage we have noticed. All tried to exploit this nexus as best as they could—which, again, does not mean they were just after personal gain. Indeed, personal authority could help to serve the cause of truth and charity even better.

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71 For the importance of preaching for John Chrysostom in maintaining his authority, see Mayer, "At Constantinople," pp. 102–104.

72 Cf. H.-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris, 1938), p. 512; Datema, "Severian of Gabala."

73 See Mayer, "At Constantinople," pp. 103–104.

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